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Shanmukha

IN FOCUS

Shanmukha enters Angeerasa, the Tamil New Year, with prayers and Wishes its Readers, Contributors, and Well-wishers a Happy New Year. There is so much of music in the air. Yet the conflict betwixt Sahitya and Sangeetha, the solution of which is crystal clear, goes on. How does an artiste of the younger generation feel about it? An upcoming artiste express his views in no uncertain terms.

Such a clear motif enmeshing Sangeetha and Sahitya in a fine blend does call for a slight variation in teaching methodology. A veteran Vainika who heads the Music Faculty of a renowned university makes an indepth study.

It is not the quantity but the quality that counts in any creative art. With just 18 compositions, come to light, how the royal composers of Ettayapuram have carved a niche for themselves among Vaggeyakaras, forms an interesting study done by eminent musicologists.

A visual interpretation of "Abhinaya Darpanam", is a great Sadhana that Acharya Parvatikumar has accomplished in dance exposition. It is almost like 'going to the roots', and there is so much toil, anxiety and excitement. SHANMUKHA attempts an analysis of the marathon delineation!

Reports on Natya Kala Conference, Seminar on "Hastaks in Kathak" etc., Therapeutic value of Music — all open up a mine of information, educative and enlightening.

Last but not least, SHANMUKHA pays its tribute to the maestros who are no more with us but have left their indelible mark in the world of music : Shivputra Komkali, better known as Kumar Gandharva, "a miracle that happened to Indian music" and Nagore Ambi Iyer, the genial, gentle strokesman.

Sahitya and Sangeeta

By

V. VAMANAN

There has been a perennial conflict amongst musicians and musicologists in ascertaining the importance, Sahitya has got to play in our music. It is indeed unfortunate that Sahitya has not been treated at par with other important aspects of our music. Even depressing, that its forming an integral part of our music has been trifled with. Sangeeta or Sahitya which of the two is of greater importance, is a vexed question that riddles the music world. According to some, sahitya attains secondary position in a kriti when compared to sangeeta. But this writer strongly feels that sahitya should be given an equal status as sangeeta. There could be no better justification to this conviction than the compositions of the Trinity of Music.

LANGUAGE OF EMOTION

Music is defined as the language of emotion, and the emotion (bhava in technical parlance) is associated with the Nava Rasas (the nine basic emotions classified in Indian aesthetics), based on particularised emotional states of the mind. Bhava can be classified under two more divisions, apart from the Nava rasas, viz., i) bhava which emerges on account of gana rasa, the rich concentration of raga bhava or the melodic interpretation of the raga; and (ii) bhava which arises when sahitya or a theme is infused into an abstract melody. For example, a bhava-laden kriti

like *Mayamma* in Ahiri, has the following opening phrase :

*Maa-yamma yani ne pilachite
maatlaada — raadaa (naato) amba*

(Although I entreat you, calling you 'my mother' why don't you talk to me? Amba!)

The setting of the Raga, Ahiri in this phrase is exceedingly well chosen. It blends and merges very well with both the mood and meaning of the song. Suppose, instead of the lyrics, we were to replace it with only the tune of the song, then the images formed (due to the awareness of the meaning of the phrases) disappear and we are left with only the emotional fervour of the raga melody. The image of the child pleading to one's mother disappears and in its place is left behind the emotions of yearning, tenderness etc., which arise out of the colour the raga projects.

Thus the Kriti is an important form of music which depicts the raga swaroopa and highlights the emotional contents of the words as well.

A critical analysis of Trinity's Kritis would bring to light as to why they were regarded as Uttama Vaggeyakaras. From an indepth study and rendition of their Kritis, one can visualize how beautifully they have been structured with both the Sahitya and Sangeetha, blending and fusing into one whole, providing as the very pillars of our music. Both the lyrics and the music are interlinked

and meshed together picturing before us the concrete raga form with the Sahitya here acting as a catalyst, without which we would have faced an identity crisis.

SAHITYAANUBHAVA

It is of utmost importance that both the performer and the student should underline more emphasis on the sahitya, its pronunciation as well as the mood it conveys. *Sahityaanubhava* forms a separate branch of study in musicology.

Just as in dance a rasika acquainted with the lyrics of a song and the theme it imports enjoys the abhinaya better, in music too, one who follows the Sahitya appreciates the rendering well. In both the cases sahitya acts as a vehicle of expression and enjoyment. But unfortunately sahitya in music has not been given the pride of place it deserves. Partly the musicians themselves are to be blamed for this laxity and partly the blame lies in our teaching/learning methodology. Do we care to impart the import of the sahitya, the right Uchcharan, the proper split (Sandhi) and pause (karvai) at the *abhyasa* stage? More often than not lyrics get mauled, meaning changed if not rendered absurd and we let go the melody reign over the lyrics and the inner core of the song. Here is an example, what a change an odd pause, an odd split, could bring about :

In the Anupallavi of Dikshitar's Goula Kriti. *Sri Mahaganapati Ravathumam* one often pauses after the word '*Kamajanaka*', a vantage point, melodically speaking. This might be effective and technically correct, but does anyone

pause to think if the meaning of the stance remain intact or gets impaired? The song is in praise of Lord Ganesha. The line actually means *Kamajanaka* i.e., Lord Krishna along with both Brahma (vidhi) & Indra are praising Lord Ganesha. But with the pause after the word *Kamajanaka*, it sounds as (Oh) '*Kamajanakaa*', 'Oh! Lord Krishna!' shifting the whole context of the song, the praise, on to Krishna. Such flaws might raise the eyebrows of Sanskrit scholars, but the uninitiated, the lay listeners, may not know. They would just relish the music. Is it not the responsibility of the singer to present the correct version? Entertaining the audience also implies educating them.

PADA-CHEDA

Pada-cheda is a very well known musical term. Many examples could be cited in proof of this point, but to give only a few samples : In *Seethamma Mayamma*, (Vasanthi) one often hears the lines "*Paramesha, Vasishtha, Parashara, Narada, Sounaka, Suka*" rendered as *Paramesha, Vasishtha, Para — shara Narada, Sounaka, Sukha*, which amounts to defacing Sage Parashara's name. The popular Bilahari Kriti *Inta-kannanandamemi* has a typical *Pada-cheda* perpetrated into an 'accepted' *Paataanthara*! "*Nee Jagamulavela Nee Jagamulu Neevai*, is being rendered *Nija Paamulavela*! Odd-splits in *Makelara* and *Gnanamosagaraada* are too well known to need any reiteration.

The Pancharatna Kritis of Tyagaraja are worst mauled and in this context, cease to remain the 'ratnams' they are. The Pancharatna being in a swara-sahitya format, the sahitya is usually split as per the splittings in swara-

pattern. This should not be the practice. The swara splitting is in accordance with the raga lakshana, but the sahitya has to be split keeping in mind, the word, its meaning, its corresponding swara as well as the continuity in music.

In *Jagadaananda Karaka*, one of the charanas is rendered by almost every musician this way :

"Srushti stityanta kara kamitha
Kamitha phaladaa samana ga /
trasachi patinuta bdhi madhahara
nura gara gara jita katha saarahita"

Whereas it should be sung this way :

Srushti stityanta karakamitha
kamitha phaladaasamana gatra
sachipati nutabdi madhahara
anuraga raga rajita kathasaarahita :

In *Endaro Mahanubhavulu*, in the last charana "*Nerigi bhava raga layadi*" is usually sung as "*Nerigi bhavara galayadi*" as per the swara splitting, "*ga ri rigari Riri Ri ... garirigari Riri*", one in the Tara Sthayi and the other in the Madhya Sthayi. If an *Irakka jaru* is applied here, one can sing with more continuity in the sahitya.

One stalwart, in the process of ornamenting a plain sangathi, in the opening phrase of *Sri Raghukula mandu* (Hamsadhwani) gave a twist at the letter '*ghu*' making it sound as *SriRa ghukula*. The brikka at this point was very pleasing to the ear, but one felt that if '*Ra*' was to be twisted, the word *Raghukula* would have been more pronounced. The musical protagonists may condone this, but certainly not Tyagaraja !

'FORLORN' NIRAVAI

Do we take adequate care in choosing a passage for a Niraval ? Quite a debatable point. Should one be satisfied with the musical elaboration alone and be indifferent to sahitya ? Is not Niraval a thematic elaboration, a Vinyasa, which implies a dominant if not equal emphasis to sahitya ? Raising eyebrow at inadequate Niraval only invites contempt.

Recently, an upcoming artiste of repute chose to perform Niraval at the Anupallavi of the famous Dikshitar Kriti *Sri Subrahmanyaya Namaste* (Kambhoji), *Bhoosuradi Samasthajana*. One could not help questioning after *Bhoosuradi samasthajana what?* What did the whole of mankind in *Bhooloka do* ? Unless the latter half of the line i.e., "*Pujitaabja charanava*" is tagged, the meaning remains incomplete.

Paluku, paluku, lakutene in Rama nee Samanamevaru (Kharaharapriya), *Soumitri Tyagarajuni in Dachukovalena* (Todi) are other examples where musicians are indifferent to the stance as a whole.

Niraval falls under the category of Manodharma Sangeetha. Only accomplished musicians may choose passages like '*Bhava, raga, tala modini, bhakthabhishta prayadini in Bhajare re chitta* (Kalyani) for elaboration. The sahitya here is also packed into the Tala avarthana that it allows little scope for manodharma.

Niraval in instrumentalists' hands depicts a different story. It wears a forlorn look, bearing no distinction with the swaraprastharas that follow ! It is

however, imperative that instrumentalists also understood the sahitya and played it with proper 'intonation'. It is equally important that the swaraprastharas that are improvised should also be in accordance with the mood generated by the song.

RIGHT PACE, RIGHT TONE

Kritis like *Telisirama chintanato* (Purna chandrika), *Nenarunchi nanu* (Malavi) and *Ninnujoochi* (Saurashtram) are treated as fillers in concert. On knowing the meaning, one realises that the mood of these songs is best evoked in slow rendition. In fact, one hardly ever 'assigns' a Vilamba rendition to these pieces. The raga might yield itself to different tempos but what about the bhava which is sacrificed ? The fast tempo is not suited for a prayerful plea. The difference in rendering should be felt by the individual who sings.

Well mannered tone is also a vital factor. Modulation plays a significant role in evoking moods, and one should train in it as part of voice-culture. In the kriti, *Yemi jesithe nemi* (Todi), Tyagaraja poses a question, of what avail is anything done by people who have not been blessed with the grace of Sri Rama ? This starts with the swara passage "*Da Pa Daa*" which is the most conventional Paatanthara. That generally lends an assertive tone, but when the same swaras are modulated, the emanating tone assumes a softer image. Suppose the swaras start from the basic note '*Sa*' as "*Sari Gamaga Ga*", in the madhya sthayi, the question posed by Tyagaraja assumes a pleading form. That could be an artistic liberty taken to ring the right mood and on the second Sangati, an assertive tone could be adopted.

In Saint Tyagaraja's compositions one finds the entire gamut of human emo-

tions traversed and the fusion of sanggeeta and sahitya total in the resulting bhava. Tyagaraja adopted a style which at once appeals to the scholar and the lay person. His songs contain the loftiest thoughts and expounds the highest truths of Indian Philosophy. He spoke the language of music in the purest form. Raga bhava is lustrously patent at every part, every turn of his compositions. It is not for nothing that his compositions are compared to *draksha rasa*.

SUPREME VAGGEYAKARA

Tyagaraja, alone, in addition to achieving pure intellectual perfection and satisfying the most exacting demands of aesthetics stands out, among the galaxy of genius composers, the supreme Vaggeyakara of emotions *par excellence*.

Many beautiful thoughts, code of ethics can be culled from his compositions. His songs on the greatness and power of music are revealing and show what absolute music is capable of. Examples : *Sangita Jnanamu, Mokshamugalada, Nadopasanache, Raga sudharasa, Swararaga sudharasa, Nee bhakthi bhagyasudha etc.*

His compositions cover the nine kinds of Bhakti either of Vairagya (austere) or Madhura (sweeter) variety. They scan the '*Sadhana Sampat Yoga*', '*Bhakti Yoga*' and '*Nada Yoga*'.

Musicians when rendering such invaluable 'gems', so pregnant with bhava, must ensure that the inner emotions are not sacrificed for the sake of mere melodic interpretations or spectacular effects. As compositions form the bulk of Karnatak concert repertoire is it not time that musicians pondered over this matter and gave it the right thrust ?

Methodology in Teaching Karnatak Music*

By

Prof. R. VISWESWARAN

There could be nothing as variable a factor as teaching methods in Indian music. This is so mostly because of the inherent difficulty in this art to evolve common denominators for teaching methods in either system of Indian Music — the Northern or Southern. Going to the bottom of the trouble, we might say that it is difficult to evolve, argue and establish common denominators of the values of this art. Common denominators in teaching methods in classical music naturally depend on those of the values of music to a large extent.

The methodology in teaching Indian classical music could be discussed under various heads such as : (i) Form & Content; (ii) Expression; (iii) Gurukula in contrast to Institutional system; & (iv) Music vs Musicology.

FORM & CONTENT

What we teach is a question we should ask ourselves first before tackling how we teach. It is here that a brief discussion on the form and content in our music, becomes necessary. In Karnatak music, we have the exercises and then the higher forms of composition as in any classical art form. Anyone who talks about teaching-method in Karnatak music will first have to pay homage to Purandara Dasa who laid down for us the pedagogical foundations which are

the bases for music teachers for over four centuries, generation after generation. It is he who abstracted the seven Talas from the Satagasuda Prabandhas as a continuation of the spade work done for this by his predecessors in the Dasakuta and established them firmly in classical music as the Suladi Talas. It is he who chose the Raga Mayamalavagaula (the equivalent of the Bhairav That in the Hindustani system) with the symmetrically arranged four pairs of notes of adjacent semitones between the tonic and octave for the beginner and composed exercises for the first three chapters of our teaching material. He has also given the beginner's simple-song-pattern in the Pillari Gitas in the Raga Malahari. Some feel that he also composed some Sanchari Gitas.

I strongly feel that Purandaradasa must have composed a few other forms in the gradation of the beginner's learning material after the Gitas — whatever forms could be prevalent four centuries ago for the music teacher and this material must have been lost and we have thus a wide gap between this stage of the Gita and his devotional songs, variously called the Kirtana or the 'Devaranama' or the Dasarapada and the sophisticated forms like the Suladis. Only a very small number of his songs and some two Suladis have been preserved for us by tradition in

notation but otherwise it is extremely frustrating not to be in a position to know the music of Purandaradasa in his songs as he must have sung them.

EXERCISE WITH 'VISION'

While on the topic of the exercises, I have a suggestion to make :

When the beginner in Karnatak music reaches the end of the first chapter — the Sarali Varisais — the teacher is fairly sure of the student's grip over pitch-sense and the notes of the Raga Mayamalavagaula. Instead of repeating, change the raga for the second chapter — i.e., the Jantai varisais — and teach the entire chapter in, say, Kharaharapriya which uses all the Vikriti swaras except Madhyama different from the ones in Mayamalavagaula. By this teaching method the student is familiarised with all the notes and pitches of the chromatic scale except the Prati Madhyama sooner than in the present system of teaching and to great advantage. Then, the Alankaras — i.e., exercises in the seven Suladi Talas could be taught each in a different raga and popular Melas. Sankarabharana, Harikambhoji, Kalyani, Simhendramadhya, Kamavardhini, Keeravani and Chakravaka could be employed for these exercises with a gradation from the easily accessible to the not so easily accessible to the student.

I am more than sure that this method of teaching gives the student broader base and a firmer rooting into the context of Karnatak music ahead of him. I have deliberately refrained from including Melas with combinations such as Komal Ri with Komal Ga and Komal Da with Komal Ni or in terms of Karnatak music, Suddha Rishabha with Sadharana Gandhara and Suddha Dhaivata with Kaisiki Nishada — as these combinations are difficult for the beginner's comprehension and rendering. It mak-

es it all the more difficult if scales with these combinations should be taught with Gamaka because application of appropriate Gamakas to these notes and note-combinations poses greater difficulty to the student and more so to the teacher to teach them than to the other notes and note-combinations due to maximum complexity in Gamaka which only brings forth the character of the raga.

I am quite convinced that by adapting this method of teaching, the content of Karnatak music in the higher forms of composition like the Varna, Kriti, Pada, Tillana, etc., and even in the domain of extemporaneous music — the Manodharma Sangeeta — will be handled by the student with more confidence, precision and sensitivity and surely with much more ease and comfort than with the existing method in which the beginner clings to the same scale too long to disadvantage.

The complexity and sophistication of Gamaka which is much more in Karnatak music than in Hindustani system operates at the bedrock level to give it the character it has and by which alone it successfully establishes its individuality and speciality on the very surface. This comes under both forms and content and expression in Karnatak music.

EXPRESSION

It should be agreed that expression in a performing art like music is as important as form and content or perhaps more important because of its being more abstract than the visual performing arts. So the importance of a perfect medium cannot be overemphasised. The medium is obviously (1) a good, flexible and elastic voice for

*Paper presented at a Seminar organised by the University of Bangalore.

vocal music discretely trained by the guru. This applies equally to a self-trained vocalist. It should be reiterated that having a good voice or producing or training to produce a good voice are very different from arm-chair-theories, pedantic speeches or voluminous writings on Voice Culture. And training the voice is no less important in teaching methods than any other aspect.

The 3 dimensions of the voice, as I would like to call them, could successfully be achieved in a voice by discrete and graded training. Thus, *Depth* or density is achieved by exercising the voice in a measured manner in the lower octave along with breathing and windpipe-widening techniques — gradually to touch the Mandra Shadja.

Height or Length — understood as the range of the voice — is achieved by exercising the voice gradually by practising full-breathed notes in the higher octave — the Tara Sthayi, increasing the pitch gradually towards the Atitara Sthayi Shadja so that the voice is aimed at being trained as acquiring a 3-octave range. It is not difficult to train voices to have a range of 2 to 2½ octaves with a little more effort. *Width* is achieved in a voice by the appropriate Gamaka practices in ragas covering the wide range of 12 pitches of the chromatic scale understood as 16 swaras in the Karnatak music.

This reminds me of the Akara-Sadhana or the vowel practices, for the voice, I had watched my elders and seniors doing when I was a boy. This was by and large the pattern of "Taming the voice" if you will permit the expression, that was then followed, say, 50 to 60 years ago. It consisted of Swara pro-

gressions in the ascent and descent with the vowels a, i, u, e & o. This was being practised with blunt notes. I am sad to say that this did not appear to get them anywhere. The voices were neither pleasant to hear nor had great capabilities.

The real goods would be delivered by doing akara-sadhana in different Ragas with the appropriate Gamakas in different speeds. Believers in such Akara Sadhana should remember at the base that such voice as they hope to improve will be employed to sing Karnatak music.

VOCAL 'COMPONENT' IN INSTRUMENTAL EXPRESSION

The other equally important aspect of the medium for expression of Karnatak music is in the instruments and the trained fingers. We certainly need to have a faultless instrument with optimal conditions and again, discretely trained fingering — with discretely trained breathing in the case of wind instruments.

Unlike in Hindustani system where there is a bunch of compositional forms like the Gats and Nugmas, expressly composed for instrumental music in Karnatak music, the content of instrumental music, by and large, is absolutely the same as for vocal music — percussion instruments obviously exempted. This should clearly indicate that instrumental music in Karnatak system should have vocal as its model and follow that.

This makes it more meaningful for expression when we remember that in Karnatak music verbal context of our compositions is as important as the music part of it. It is actually the Sa-

hitya that sets the mood of a composition and that is what the composer has intended. In fact, it is the Sahitya par excellence of the great-for-all-time Trinity of Karnatak music — Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri — that have crystallised the magnificent Lakshyas of our great Ragas.

PRECISION IN 'INTONATION'

It is, therefore, very necessary that students of instrumental music should not be allowed to ignore the Sahitya of compositions. It is incumbent on teachers of instrumental music to make an effort to attract the attention of the students to the Sahitya by describing to them the meanings of the verbal context of the song and thus retain and maintain the spirit of the compositions. This incidentally helps the students avoid mechanically-playing on instruments and to put some life into the music they play.

The importance of correct and good fingering technique cannot be over-emphasised for effective and meaningful expression in music on instruments. In fact, this is sometimes an insurmountable hurdle for students.

Correct expression of the ragabhava in all its subtlety with all the microtonal swara-values in the process of Gamaka appropriately employed for this purpose makes big demands on the student's good understanding and fingering technique. Again, perfect discretion in the employment of Gamaka in musical phrases, the measurements, the proprieties in lengthening or shortening notes, the logicity in the succession of musical phrases, the intensity of the plucking or bowing or blowing and many practical entities are of vital importance to perform good music.

Methology in teaching in higher levels implies inculcating in the students a correct, good and high conception of classical music, its highest values and a keen sense of responsibility and duty to maintain the purity of the art and its values and spread the same. Tendencies for mass-catching techniques like stunts and gimmicks and tendencies for playing on the psychology of the listeners more efficiently than one's instruments and cleverly dragging them to applaud trash and base material in music, presenting the same in the garb of profundity — all this to camouflage one's own inadequacies in art and selfish motives — should be vehemently denounced.

'TUNING IN THE EAR'

Affording opportunities to listen to quality music is as important as actual teaching. Teachers should properly guide their students to listen to concerts of really eminent artistes and guide them against popularity being sometimes wrongly understood as eminence. Teachers should rise above personal equations and dispassionately assess the worth of their students and encourage them. Equally dispassionately should recognise the merit and worth in other musicians and music teachers and acknowledge the same.

The teacher, in short, should be a model of good music, high values of the art, Vatsalya and Audarya to his disciples, Sahrdayata and Maryada to his fellow musician-teachers, sincerity in his desire to promote his disciple with a sound scholarship in music. Is there any meaning to methodology in music teaching without such an ideal for the music teacher?

GURUKULA SYSTEM

A little over 40 years of experience as a music-teacher, including 28 years of teaching graduate and post-graduate courses clearly drives me to prefer the Gurukula system of teaching music to the institutionalised teaching-pattern, despite a few shortcomings of the former and a few attractions of the latter.

The discretion that the teacher is free to exercise in choosing his disciples, freedom in the teacher to design the pattern and gradation in the lessons to be taught in accordance with the talent and I.Q. of the disciple, the most welcome rapport built up between the teacher and the taught because of the limited number of disciples and the consequent concentration of personal attention, freedom in varying the duration of a class-session, utilisation of the inspiration of the teacher to advantage of the student resulting from such duration-relaxation, availability of more time for the student to listen to his/her teacher's music, intimate knowledge of the teacher's ideas and views on matters concerning music, theory, musicians, profession, composers and their compositions, styles etc., availability of ample opportunity for imbibing and developing one distinct style in music and above all, opportunity for in-depth study of music which IS the way to study a performing art like music, opportunities for the disciples to be introduced into the profession and field with weight, dignity and respect by and in the aura of the personality of the Guru — are a few points of fact which speak eloquently in favour of the need to adopt the Gurukula system of teaching in our music-education, even in institutions. The nature of this art being what it is we would be doing only the right thing

if we made radical changes in the present set up in the student-teacher ratio, working-hours of the institutions, curriculum, preferences, facilities for teachers and amenities to the students, building and equipment.

The freekiness and the consequent unpredictability of the teacher's mood and hence his grace for a class session on the waist-bound devotee-disciple who shall not dare ask or indicate to the guru that he has been waiting for a class-session for several weeks, lack of any other opening to the disciple should he fail as a musician or music teacher etc., are some of the facts in the old Gurukula system that are likely to dissuade the would-be-disciples. To my thinking, that demanding generation is gone and the present day guru even in the Gurukula set-up is a more socially enlightened, kind, generously oriented person with the pluses of the system in the changed environment.

That the institutionalised system of teaching does not pose such risks as mentioned above in the old gurukula set-up is poor consolation when this system is hardly able to claim the lasting art-oriented results produced by that system — in its ideal set up.

The 'goods' offered by the institutionalised teaching of music should nevertheless be recognised.

1. Music-instruction is more easily accessible to a larger number of desirous and potentially good students and at low cost.
2. More people have opportunities to take up music as a means of livelihood — essentially as music-teachers.
3. Music-students are compelled to know some musicology unlike in the gurukula system.

4. Music students have variety in their syllabi, in composers, ragas, compositions etc., though nothing can be of indepth study.
5. Opportunities for widening one's outlook by being exposed to other styles and musical comradeship.

Yet, the very time-bound pattern of the class, course, syllabi, degree, post-graduation and even doctoral degrees in the institutionalised pattern of music-teaching totally negates any indepth study of this art. Official and academic yokes make the situation worse. Sometimes politicalities operate in the system strongly and worthwhile changes in the curricula or pattern of education or policies are nipped off in the proposal stage itself in the boards of studies supposed to be an academic and only academic body by lobby.

MUSIC vs MUSICOLOGY

Teaching of musicology consists in many a case mostly of copying down pages from printed books — good, bad and indifferent, indiscriminately and dictating it to the students taking adequate care to be discretely grim, grave and strict to scare away questions or desire for clarification.

Too many styles of music, voice types and fingering techniques that the students would be obliged to follow weigh very heavily on their minds and the bad teacher is usually aggressive on the students for obvious reasons. And the 'Master of Music' and sometimes even the Ph.D. in Music coming out of such a time-bound and severally-bound course in music with the associated psychology is more hila-

rious than meaningful. In short, brilliance and real education in music and these degrees are two different things by and large.

Hence, a re-patterning of the entire system of our music education is an urgent necessity.

I wish I could say 'Music and Musicology'. We teach a lot of musicology in our institutions with varied topics. How much of musicology we teach has something to do with the art of music, the performed music? For the sake of music, for the sake of our students, let us evolve and teach a kind of musicology that is complementary to music itself, the performed music, which helps our students get a better understanding of music, the performing art, assimilate and perform contemporary classical music with the best values and for best effect, entertainment, enjoyment, elevation, elation — in short, best results.

Let us not forget that the Indian music of 20th century did emerge from a long process of continuous evolution which started from the pre-Bharata period. Let us of course respect all those great writers who have guided the course, music over centuries by describing music of their times but, let us not make a hue and cry of how Yashtika differed from Viswvasu or what passages of Kohala appear to be taken straight from Sardula, what was the gauge of the gut that Bharata must have used for his Dhruva Veena for his experiment on 22 Srutis etc., to our naturally music-minded and not so musicologically-minded students. Let us not burden our students who are being taught the swings, circlings, twists, bends, extensions, stresses etc., for

Swaras, for a lot of meaning we have in the Panchadasa Gamakas for Karnatak music, with the unwanted, unmeaningful frequency values, the ratios, the 9/8s 81/80s or which is a swara-occupied sruti and which is a blank sruti all this and more.

Let us continue musicology of the above said material as a separate discipline, like History, Archaeology, or study of the moon-rock; but let us emanci-

pate our music students who not only fail to benefit from such fossil study but also get burdened, confused and distracted away from their concentration on the art itself.

Let us not be verbose for verbosity's sake, let us not discuss because of an appointment, let us not write or talk because we can be appreciated. Let us not beat about the bush. Let us aim and shoot.

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Compositions of Ettayapuram Rulers ★

By

Dr. GOWRI KUPPUSWAMY & Dr. M. HARIHARAN

The Telugu edition of Subbarama Dikshitar's *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsani*, published in 1904 chronicles a detailed account of four generations of Ettayapuram rulers who were all, without exception, active votaries of music and ardent patrons of musicians. Most of them were themselves well-versed in languages such as Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit as well as in music. A few among them were also composers of no mean order. Born in 1761, Venkatesvara Eddappa I ascended the throne in 1816 and died in 1839. He carved a niche for himself in the history of music of South India, as the royal patron who reverently looked after the Dikshitar family, especially Muthuswami Dikshitar, during the eminent composer's last phase of life.

ETTAYAPURAM & DIKSHITAR

The eldest among Eddappa I's sons, Kumara Ettendra, was the most prominent and versatile among the Ettayapuram composers and he was the disciple of Baluswami Dikshitar. The last in the line, Venkatesvara Eddappa III, became the ruler in 1899 and was instrumental in providing moral and financial support to Subbarama Dikshitar in the publication of his magnum opus, *Sangitha Sampradaya Pradarsani*.

The relationship between the Ettayapuram patrons and Dikshitar family forms an interesting chapter of the region's cultural history.

In the course of their pilgrimage the Dikshitar brothers, Chinnaswami and Baluswami, stayed for some time at Madurai where the former died in 1823. Griefstricken, Baluswami proceeded to Ramesvaram where he met Venkatesvara Eddappa Raja who had gone there for worship. The Raja was amazed by Baluswami's all round erudition in music, including his proficiency in the new instrument, violin, as well as his capacity to compose songs. He took him to Ettayapuram, made him his court-musician and also arranged for his second marriage.

In the meanwhile Muthuswami Dikshitar came to know of Chinnaswami's demise and impelled by a consuming desire to see his sole surviving brother, Baluswami, went to Madurai. After spending sometime there, paying obeisance to the presiding deities, Sundaresvara and Minakshi, and composing a number of delectable kritis on them, Dikshitar continued his search for his brother and proceeded to Sattur where he learnt of Baluswami's impending marriage at Ettayapuram. On reaching Ettayapuram Dikshitar's joy knew no bounds at his union with his brother after a long separation on the happy occasion of the latter's marriage. Venkatesvara Eddappa received Dikshitar with all the respect and honour due to him and persuaded him to settle down at Ettayapuram, blessing him as his Guru and adorning his court as the leading light. That Dikshitar was great-

*Paper presented at the Conference of Music Academy, Madras.

ly moved by the Raja's munificence and affection is reflected in his Megharanjani kriti, *Venkatesvara Yadava Bhupathim Asrayeham*, the text of which is couched in double meaning. Here, the name of his benefactor Venkatesvara is cleverly used to sound as prayer to God Venkatesvara in his incarnation as Krishna, the Yadava king; besides, the portion in the sahitya giving the Raga Mudra suggests that the Raja honoured Dikshitar with a Kanakabhisheka or shower of gold coins as well as gift of lands. Likewise in his Suddhadanyasi kriti *Subramanyena* on the Lord of Kazhugumalai, the family deity of the Ettayapuram rulers, Dikshitar has introduced the Raja's name as the Poshaka Mudra in the phrase *Venkatesvara Supujitham* referring to Subramanya as one worshipped by Venkatesvara.

Dikshitar spent his last days peacefully at Ettayapuram under the benign care of his brother's family with the comforts gratefully provided by the Raja and passed away in 1835. The Raja arranged to build Dikshitar's samadhi at Ettayapuram which has become a place of pligrimage for lovers of music and art.

PROFOUND KNOWLEDGE

Out of the eighteen compositions of the Ettayapuram rulers to which we have access at present, only one is in Telugu; four are in Tamil; and the remaining thirteen are in Sanskrit. Among these, only the Telugu composition is a Padam; all the rest in Tamil as well as Sanskrit are kritis. The Telugu Padam *Enduku* was composed by Venkatesvara Eddappa III and its theme relates to the conversation between Murugan and Valli on the occasion of the latter being threatened by Vinayaka in disguise, as an elephant. All the Tamil compositions are also on Muruga. Two

of these — *Muruga Tharugilaya Un Thiruppada Sevai Seyya* and *Va Va Va Nee Valli Manala* — were composed by the same ruler while the other two — *Sivagurunathanai* and *Muruga Unai Nambinenayya* — have been composed by Venkatesvara Eddappa I. The Sanskrit kritis were all composed by Kumara Ettendra of which nine are kritis on Kartikeya. Thus the vast majority — as many as fourteen out of eighteen — of the compositions of the Ettayapuram rulers are on Subramanya and this is not strange considering that Subramanya of Kazhugumalai was their family deity. In most of the Sanskrit compositions on Subramanya, the Devata Mudra is Kartikeya but epithets like Shanmukha and Swaminatha also occur. Guha is common to the Sanskrit as well as Tamil compositions but Muruga, Kanda, Saravanabhava and Vadivela are confined only to the Tamil pieces. From an analysis of the Sahitya of these compositions it is evident that the Ettayapuram rulers possessed a profound knowledge of our Agamas and Puranas and so it is relevant to consider briefly the genesis of these different epithets of Subramanya from the standpoint of Hindu mythology.

Muruga is an exclusively Tamil name for Subramanya. According to Nakkirar, Muruga stands for the divine beautiful young Kumara, the progeny of Siva and Parvathi. Kanda is the Tamil equivalent of the Sanskrit name Skanda, which is derived from the root 'Skand' meaning to emanate. From Siva's third eye emanated six sparks even as lightning does from the clouds and Siva directed Agni and Vayu to take them to Ganga. Ganga kept the sparks with her for sometime until she could bear their heat no longer and then carried them to the Saravana pond — so

called because it was full of reeds. From this pond arose an infant on a lotus. Since the Saravana pond gave birth to the infant he was called Saravanabhava and since he had six faces (apart from twelve hands and twelve eyes on a single body) he was also known as Shanmukha. The Krittikas became the infant's foster mothers and hence the name Kartikeya. The name Guha stands for the deity dwelling in the heart. Murugan's chief weapon is the spear or *Vel* presented to him by his mother for destroying the demon Sura Padma and this is the genesis of the name Vadivela.

Passing on to the musical aspects, all the thirteen Sanskrit compositions are set in Adi Tala of 1 or 2 Kalais as are two of the Tamil pieces — *Sivagurunathanai* and *Va Va Va Nee Valli Manala*. Of the other two Tamil Kritis, *Muruga Unai Nambinenayya* is set in Rupakam while *Muruga Tharugilaya* is in Misra Jathi Eka which is also the Tala of the Telugu Padam *Enduku*.

DIKSHITAR & KUMARA ETTENDRA

Kumara Ettendra's four compositions on deities other than Kartikeya are *Shadadhara Tatva Vinayaka* in Sri Raga on Vinayaka; *Paramananda Sara* in Bhairavi on Siva; *Karunananda Chaiture* in Nilambari on Devi and *Nikhilnanda Nitya Pradeepa* in Saveri on Narayana. His nine kritis on his family deity are :

- (1) *Karunananda Madhuraprasada* — Brindavani; (2) *Karunasalahari* — Yadukulakambodi; (3) *Iha Para Sadana* — Nata; (4) *Nityananda Kartikeya* — Asaveri; (5) *Gajavadana Sammoditha Vira* — Todi; (6) *Karunasara Madhuraprasada* — Mukhari; (7) *Sarasadala Netra* — Atana; (8) *Ashtanga*

Yoga Prabhava — Sankarabharanam and (9) *Sivananda Rajayoga Prakasa* — Suruti.

Muthuswami Dikshitar's impact on Kumara Ettendra is manifest in the fact that the first four compositions in the above list are Vibhakthi Kritis on Kartikeya — the Brindavani kriti through the phrase *Kartikeya Devo Rakshata Mam* (1st Vibhakthi); the Yadukulakambodi one through *Kartikeyena Kriarthosmyaham* (3rd Vibhakthi); the Nata kriti through *Kartikeya dithara Deivam na Janamyaham* (5th Vibhakthi); and the Asaveri kriti through *Kartikeye Nityam Manasa Bhaktim Kuru* (7th Vibhakthi)..

Regarding the Tamil songs composed by Venkatesvara Eddappa I, *Sivagurunathanai* is also set in Mukhari while *Muruga Unai Nambineyya* is set in Rudrapriya. Strangely, the pieces composed by Venkatesvara Eddappa III have been set in multiple ragas. While the notation for the song *Va Va Va Nee Valli Manala* is available in both Bhairavi and Sankarabharanam, that for the song *Muruga Tharugilaya* is available in three different ragas — Vasantha, Anandabhairavi and Khamas. The raga of the Telugu Padam *Enduku* is Kambhodi.

RASA-PRONED RAGA

It can be seen that the Ettayapuram rulers have used exclusively Suddhamadhyama ragas for their compositions. They have chosen the apt raga for each composition calculated to delineate its dominant rasa. For instance, Atana, most suited to portray Vira rasa, has been employed for *Sarsadala Netra* which describes Kartikeya's heroic exploits such as destroying the demons Tarakasura and

Sura Padma. Likewise, Mukhari, most capable of evoking Karuna Rasa, has been used for *Karunasara Madhuraprasada*, describing the deity as the provider of the essence of Karuna. The phrase, *Gana Nava Rasa Bhava* in this kriti describes Subramanya as enjoying the Nava Rasas and is reminiscent of Tyagaraja's kriti in the same raga, *Sangita Sastra*, the Anupallavi of which contains the phrase *Sringara Rasadi Akhilasarapuritha Ramakatha*, referring to the story of Rama as replete with Navarasas.

TOTAL INFLUENCE

Muthuswami Dikshitar's influence on the Ettayapuram composers, especially Kumara Ettendra, is evident in their choice of ragas and even to a greater extent, in their choice of words and phrases. This is borne out by the choice, for one of their compositions, of Rudrapriya, a raga handled by Dikshitar alone among the Trinity. The use of Sri Raga by Kumara Ettendra for his kriti *Shadadhara Tatva Vinayaka* is in line with Dikshitar's use of the same raga for his Ganapathi kriti, *Sri Muladhara Chakra Vinayaka*. In fact, the Pallavi of the former kriti, set mostly in Mandra and Madhya Sthayi, is very similar to that of this Dikshitar composi-

tion. Like Dikshitar, Kumara Ettendra has employed the *Pa Da Ni* Prayoga in this kriti — a Sanchara one does not encounter in the Sri Raga kritis of Tyagaraja. The words *Shadadhara* and *Shadanana* occurring in this kriti have been used in the same manner giving rise to Prasa Yati in Dikshitar's Khamas composition *Shadanane*.

In his Todi kriti *Gajavadana Sammoditha*, Kumara Ettendra has employed the word *Gajavalliramana* to refer to Kartikeya as Devayani's consort and interestingly Dikshitar has used a similar word, *Gajamba Ramanaya* in the same context in another Khamas kriti of his, *Swaminathaya*. The phrase *Pandya Rajya Sthitha Palana Lila* in the Sankarabharana kriti *Ashtanga Yoga Prabhadva* reminds one of the phrase *Pandya Keraladi Desa Prabhakaram* in Dikshitar's *Hariharaputram* (Vasanta).

Kumara Ettendra must have been obviously inspired in using the phrase *Amrita Varshini Varshini Amritam Varshini Varshini* in his Nilambari kriti *Karunananda Chature* by the phrase *Amritesvari Salilam Varshaya Varshaya* in Dikshitar's *Amritavarshani* kriti *Anandamritakarshani*.

(To be concluded)



A Life-time Sadhana

By

Dr. SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

Nandikeswara's *Abhinaya Darpanam* is Acharya Parvatikumar's second major project of visual interpretation and a life-time Sadhana at that. It fathoms the depths of the vocabulary of gesture language in dance presentation. The finished product that he presented in February this year at the Tejpal Auditorium, ranks him among the great interpreters of our grammar and Granthas.

The first project of the Acharya, it may be recollected, was to give a visual form to the Nirupanas of King Serfoji II, the Maratha ruler of Tanjore, contained in the monarch's "*Korvya-che Sahityache Jinnus*, a song-narrative with an Ekartha theme, covering the entire Bharata Natya Margam, in 18 numbers, ranging from "Jaya Jaya" (the traditional Todayamangalam), Alarippu right upto Tillana, Sloka and Mangalam. It was a challenge to any choreographer in that the whole set of compositions were composed in one Raga and one Tala. The illustrious King not only composed the lyrics and music but also notated it with 'Sollus' (jathis) for Nritha. The peculiarity of the Nirupanas was not only in the single-Raga-Tala scheme but in composing Marathi lyrics to Karnatak Raga. Quite an effort at integration through music and dance! It was Acharya Parvatikumar who got fascinated with this peculiar 'creation' and set himself to working on it. But for him, this 'challenging work' of Serfoji would have remained in MSS in the Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Library.

That the Nirupanas, and the other Marathi Padas were propagated by his disciples like Sucheta Chapekar, Parul Jhaveri and others is a well known historical fact today.

'Going to the roots' is in the Acharya's bloodstream. After the Marathi Nirupanas, it was the "Abhinaya Darpanam". He involved himself into an indepth study of the 'roots' from where emanated the Hasta Mudras, Siro-bhedas, Paada Bhedas, Mandalas, Charis, Utplavanas etc. His focus of attention turned to the *Abhinaya Darpanam* which alone, in his conviction, qualifies as the text of Bharata Natyam.

A documentation of the technique of histrionic representation, this manual of gesture vocabulary comprises 324 Shlokas, each with a wealth of meaning. "To capture the profundity of each Shloka is like trying to gather the ocean in a tiny vessel", says the Acharya.

It is nothing short of a herculean task that the Acharya has achieved, encapsulating the interpretation of these 324 Shlokas in a marathon 3-hour dance presentation. Working for years on this manual he has choreographed the Shlokas with a deep vision of a choreographer and teacher of Bharata Natyam. Not only the dance choreography; in the musical score, the selection of apt Ragas, Talas, Laya intricacies — in all, the Acharya has his hand, assisted by his wife Sumati.

His main objective is "to generate a more serious approach to the study of

dance, so that a deeper understanding of the theory of dance could lead to more mature and perceptive levels of performance and appreciation." Definitions and *Viniyogas* (elaborations) formed an interesting core of the presentation.

The three-hour long presentation was the first of its kind and a marathon visualisation of a *Lakshana Grantha* (a text of grammar), though part of the research work was presented earlier in 1986 at Delhi under the aegis of ICCR and at the *Natya Kala* conference organised by the Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras.

No recital it is, but a demonstration of the *Snabdarth* or literal meaning of the words in shloka with *Vyabhichari bhavas*, the transitory states of expressions," the Acharya said at an informal talk with the writer and added that "it might as such interest only students of dance."

However, as the 'modest demonstrations' of the codified Lakshanas of the gesture vocabulary unfolded, one found much material to understand and appreciate. He had himself clarified in his introductory remarks that "a word may have shades of interpretation, but we have composed the text keeping in mind the author's intent and what would appeal to the lay person. The three-fold power of the word — the literary, indicative and semantic along with the transitory states become so evident."

In Sandhya Purecha's presentation it came off as a lucid elucidation, blending harmoniously the body language and expressions that the *mudras* evoked at physical and mental levels. The visual lucidity equally owed to the syn-

chrony of fluent musical spin-up in a varied *Tala* format.

Besides, wherever the text of *Abhinaya Darpanam* had confined itself to definitions alone, the Acharya has drawn from the more comprehensive *Natya Sastra* and other texts, making the vocabulary more viable to dance interpretation.

There may not have been, the *Nritta Kandikas* (sequences), the intricate *Teermanams* or *Abhinaya Sancharis* which usually form part of a recital. That did not deter the audience, (quite a number of lay *rasiks* were present), from enjoying and appreciating this educative and enlightening presentation. So much for the Guru's ingenuity and the Chela's virtuosity. In a nutshell, the *Abhinaya Darpanam* in Acharya's choreography and Sandhya's fine enunciation effulged as a wholesome "Geetam-Vadhyam-Nrityam."

The levels of interpretation touched an intellectual high though "to reach the lay" was not lost sight of. For instance, the modes of *Namaskar* (*Namaskritya*) with deeper connotations and the *Sathvika* which at one level represents the very Lord of Dance, *Sathvika Shiva*, and at the other, forms part of the four modes of *Abhinaya* (expressions), are very much the source material at the intellectual level for students of dance. The same given an imaginative elaboration (also drawn from the *Lakshana Grantha-Natya Sastra*) was made intelligible to the lay audience.

Who would not follow the mental and physical reactions that *Bhaya* (fear), for instance, caused when lucidly visualised?

The eight conditions — *Sthambhaya* (motionlessness), perspiration, horror, change of colour and voices, tremors or shivers, tears and swooning — that resulted from fear at various situations, could easily be followed by one and all.

The streamlined presentation of *Shloka* and *Viniyoga*, the former clothed appropriately in "chant" and the latter in a *Bandish* (composition) in medium tempo, in the same *Raga* with lilting gait weaving through *Pancha gati* (five paces), added its own substance and sustenance to the visual.

Simple and not loaded with aesthetic ornamentation of *Gamakas* (graces) though, the musical score, composed by the Acharya and his wife Sumati, was not bereft of its vitality. On the contrary, it had its own purpose to serve, with an impact all its own. The deep-throated vocalism of Venugopal Pillai (himself a merited dance guru) and the ringing timbre of Laxmi Parthasarathy fused well to support the visual. The Ragas too were mostly of the time-tested varieties.

Salutation to deities, *Anga Lakshanas*, *Hasta Lakshanas* including the *Deva Hastas*, *Navagraha Hastas* and *Bandhava Hastas*, the *Paada Bhedas*, the *Charis* (gaits), the *Bhramaris* (spins), the *Utplavanas* (leaps) and the *Mandalas* (postures) — all in the *Shlokas* moved in fleeting precision. Sandhya's elasticity and endurance were commendable.

There was so much of natural ease and fluency in her presentation, no dull moment, no sagging spirit.

Working with the Acharya on this research project, the danseuse seemed to have fused into her system the very *lakshanas* she was set to delineate.

Witnessing the *Abhinaya Darpanam* presentation with each of the *shlokas* having a wealth of meaning and scope for interpretations, one was convinced that there is no need to grope for material for innovation outside tradition.

There is enough within our texts and tradition. If one had only the vision, imagination and interpretative ability!



NATYA KALA CONFERENCE

Thrust on Lasya Aspect of Dance" was the theme of the 11th Natya Kala Conference, organised by Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras, during the December Festival, last year. Ably conducted by the Convener, Smt. Sudharani Raghupathy, the morning lec-dems (from 20th to 31st Dec.) brought to fore many facets of the theme in different dance streams. A significant feature of the conference was the release of the booklet comprising papers presented by the eminent artistes and scholars at the 10th Natya Kala Conference, in 1990.

Releasing the booklet during the festival, Shri T. S. Parthasarathy, the eminent musicologist-Secretary of the Music Academy, Madras and Fellow of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, rightly applauded the efforts of the convenor Sudharani for venturing into publishing the papers into a booklet as it contained a "mine of information to dancers and researchers", collected from authentic sources and condensed in an article form by eminent artiste-scholars, each one of whom is a specialist in his or her field. It was only apt that this veritable treasure should be received first by Dr. Padma Subramanyam, whose brain-child the Natya Kala Conference was.

The Keynote Address by Dr. N. Mahalingam itself set the intellectual tempo of the conference. After paying a 'silent' Tribute to the memory of Natyacharya Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai, who passed away early in the month of December and the Convener's welcome address Dr. Mahalingam began with the

hoary tradition of the Tamils to the Dance art. Tracing the history of dance, about its antiquity and tradition, he said that Dance is not only an art but also a science and it was cultivated as a fine art in Tamil Nadu. Rules for the performance of various kinds of dance, he pointed out, have been mentioned in the ancient Tamil works, such as, *Tolkappiam*, *Pancha Marabu* and *Silappadikaram*. And Dance in Tamil Nadu has been 2,000 years old. He also brought to notice that Bharata's *Natya Sastra* in Sanskrit, the Indian dance grammar, does not contain any *Sahitya* used for dance or music, but Tamil language has songs set to music and dance in Sangam literature, *Silappadikaram* and later in *Tevaram* and *Divya Prabandham*.

It was high time, he suggested, that serious research into the origin of dance in India from the days of Kumari Kandam were undertaken and its antiquity and glory made known to the world over. He also suggested starting degree and post-graduate courses for dances of different streams in colleges and Universities.

Mallari, its musical, ritualistic and dance implications, was the subject of the lec-dem by Prof. William Skelton, of the Colgate University, U.S.A., on the opening day. He explained that Mallari is a unique musical form associated with utsava processions of the deities of all the Hindu temples. He said that Mallari is a minor form drawn from the rich palette of Bharathanatyam repertoire and that the great dancers of the temples in the past did go in procession

not only outside during Ratha and other festivals but often within the temple proper. He himself demonstrated a few ragas of Mallari played on Nadaswaram along with Mambalam M. K. S. Siva and party and performed in Bharathanatyam by Sri Venkatachalapathy's disciples.

GATHAS

"Sringara Rasa in *Gatha Sapthasati*" was a topic of an illuminating lecture-demonstration given by Prof. V. Subramanian of Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, on the second day. He said that *Gatha Sapthasati* is an anthology of 700 poems on various facets or human love written in Prakrit language of the Maharashtra region. It is termed as *Sattasai* in Prakrit. The poems were selected and compiled together as an anthology through the sponsorship of King Hala of the Satavahana dynasty in the first century after Christ. This work exercised a very strong influence in the evolution of literature in the North Indian languages including Sanskrit, aesthetical concepts of *Alankara Sastra* and the emergence of Sringara, the dominant rasa in dance. He further stated that it is similar to *Aham* poetry of the Sangam period in content, context, grammar and structure. In both cases the poems never revealed the identity of the speaker or the person addressed, leaving it to the reader. Tamil *Aham* poetry deals mostly with some civilised, side glances with the courtesans or the other women. It is mostly silent about adultery with paramour and the like. But the *Gathas* are more comprehensive and less inhibited and they include poems in plenty dealing with cheating wives and artful courtesans. The seven selected *Gathas*, depicting different phases of human love, replete with Sringara rasa, were demonstrated by Smt. Nirmala Ramachandran and her disciples.

In the demonstration on Abhinaya by Smt. Lakshmi Knight, this year's Nrithya Choodamani and daughter of late T. Balasaraswati, the Queen of Abhinaya, there was less of lecture and more of demonstration exhibiting the various facets of Sringara rasa in abhinaya presented through a few selected Padams and Javalis. She briefly stated that the Padams and Javalis demonstrated were divided into four different categories, one depicting the various situations in one raga (demonstrated in Saveri), the second representing the rhythmic complexities (demonstrated in a madhyama kala Padam), the third representing the blending of hand gestures, the movement of hand and facial expressions with Raga Sanchara and Gamaka and the fourth variety depicting the pangs of separation of a Nayaka from his wife through facial expressions and gestures.

ABHINAYA VARIATIONS

Dwelling on the same subject of Padams and Javalis, the following day, and highlighting the various facets of Sringara Rasa in abhinaya, Lakshmi Viswanathan of the Conjeevaram School of Bharatanatyam observed that the concept of Padam could be interpreted as "Drishti Kavya", meaning a visual poetry and the poetic implications of a Padam could not be interpreted in dance unless an artiste had knowledge of the intrinsic meaning of the song besides the mere *sahitya*. She mentioned that Kshetragna was the king of Padams which are viable for full exploitation of Abhinaya, the quintessence of Bharathanatyam. She demonstrated, a few Padams and Javalis in Ragas Sankarabaranam, Kalyani, Kambhodi etc.

Next came a demonstration of Ras in Manipuri dance by the artistes of Jawaharlal Nehru Dance Academi of Imphal. A few selected Ras like Ma-

haras, Vasantha Ras and Kunja Ras were demonstrated by the artistes. Though Manipuri dance is not as swift as Bharathanatyam yet its grace and elegance are superb. The music is also melodious. Most of the music compositions for Manipuri dance are drawn from *Srimad Bagavatham*, *Geeta Govindam* etc.

"Musical Instruments, their Depiction in Visual Arts Through The Ages" by Dr. Premlatha Puri, Director, C.C.R.T., New Delhi, on the fourth day, was an informative lecture. Tracing the history of musical instruments, Dr. Premalatha Puri observed, that India is the inheritor of one of the evolved musical systems and that musical instruments are the tangible and material representation of music which is an auditory art. Quoting from the *Rig Veda*, *Natya Sastra* and other texts, she pointed out that the Vadyas or musical instruments have been divided into two groups based on their properties i.e., melodic and percussion. Tata and Sushira belong to the melodic group whereas Avanadha and Ghana relate to the percussion category. She added that a study of the prehistoric caves provides a clear evidence for the existence of the above four categories of musical instruments. She explained the features of the various kinds of ancient and modern musical instruments with the aid of slides projected on the screen.

SUKUMARA PRAYOGA

This was followed by Dr. Padma Subramaniam's lecture demonstration on "Lasyangas". "Lasya", she observed, sprang from the root 'Las' meaning to shine. Sukumara Prayoga is Lasya. She spoke about the various Lasyangas written in the various texts, like *Natya Sastra*, *Sangeeta Ratnakara*, *Nritta Rat-*

navali etc. She stressed the importance of the combination of symmetry, grace, proportion and perfect movement which are indispensable to an artiste of the dance discipline. Dr. Padma concluded with demonstration of Suka Lasya where dance to the music is more important than the rhythmic patterns of the music.

RASA UNIVERSALISATION

The fifth day opened up with a lecture-demonstration on "Navarasas in the Azhwars" by Ms Anitha and Pritha Ratnam who said that the *Nalayira Divya Prabhandam* containing 4000 verses, also known as the *Dravida Veda*, revealed the aesthetic excellence and the devotional outpourings of the twelve Azhwars. They were unique inasmuch as they constituted the essence and soul of heart-yielding ananda and supreme bliss. She along with her sister Pritha depicted the eight rasas and the ninth as Sloka in the nine pasurams chosen.

This was followed by a lecture-demonstration by Miss Priya Mahadevan on "The Concept of Universalisation in Rasa". The concept of universalisation, she said, was not a new phenomenon in the realm of art as the main objective of every art, be it music, dance, painting, or sculpture, tended towards idealisation and universalisation. The elimination of time and space constituted basic objective of the concept of universalisation which had been expounded by Bhattanayaka in his treatise entitled *Hrdya Darphana*. Priya Mahadevan explained this concept in relation to rasa element in dance with a demonstration by the students of Sree Bharathalaya with themes drawn from the select scenes of *The Ramayana*.

Smt. Kalanidhi Narayanan's theme, on the 6th day, was, on the concept of Nayakas. Though Nayakas are broadly classified as Pati, Upapati and Vaisika, they could, she observed, be further subdivided according to the emotional states they were subjected to. She demonstrated a few of them with practical expositions drawn from the Padams of Kshetragna.

Following this Ms. Jetty Roels of Belgium brought to focus "Indian Dance through Western eyes". She observed that there was extreme openness in the early part of the 19th century as the Western dancers, influenced by the spirituality, mysticism of India and the fluidity and elegance of the Indian dance and that of the Middle East, incorporated the same in their dance art. She also pointed out that Isodore Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Martha Graham, eminent dancers of the West, inspired and influenced by Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal and others, did not hesitate to incorporate certain features of the dance art of the Orient in their choreographic numbers.

MUSIC IN DANCE

"Music and dance are inseparable from one another and both constitute to evoke aesthetic excellence and elegant visual appeal of the highest order," observed Udipi Lakshminarayana, speaking on "Impact of Music on Nritya" (7th day). The impact of music on dance is so pronounced as could be discerned from the Vedas and other texts, he reiterated. He illustrated this with demonstrations.

The lec-dem on "Jathiswarams of Madurai N. Krishnan" traced its evolution to the *Sangita Muktavali* of Devendra, (about 1400 years back), where it

has been interpreted as "Suddha Yeti Nritta" and "Raganga Yeti Nritta". Jathiswaram formed part of the Sadir about 300 years ago. Hailing from an illustrious musical family, Madurai Krishnan, it was said, has carved a niche for himself in composing Jathiswarams, noted for the fine and excellent array of Swaras and Jatis. Demonstrations of a select few proved this point.

Dr. Sunil Kothari, Professor and Head of the Dance Department, Ravindra Bharati University, in his talk on "Odissi — Context and Continuity" (8th day) brought to fore the evolution of the modern Odissi dance from the tradition preserved at one time by Gotipua dancers imbibed from the Maharis (Devadasis).

The present day gurus like Pankaj Charan Das, Kelucharan Mahapatra, Deva Prasad, Mayadhar Raut etc., are instrumental in having resurrected this crude form from the Gotipua boys, and embellished the same with their classic touches and innovativeness and given Odissi its rightful place among the major classical dance forms of the Indian dance, he added. Ratikant Mahapatra son of Kelucharan Mahapatra and the disciples of Ms Prothima Bedi rendered a few items of the modern Odissi dance with delightful grace and exquisite elegance.

Following this was a lecture-demonstration on "Bandha Nrithya" by Dr. D. N. Patnaik who observed that the young Gotipua boys dressed as girls were the retainers of Odissi dance for over three hundred years from 15th to 19th century. After the advent of the modern sophisticated Odissi dance, the scion of the Gotipua tradition has gone into oblivion and only four or five groups

are surviving. He also stated that the modern Odissi dance was revived only in the 'fifties of this century inspired by the sculptural poses found in the temples of Konark and Puri etc., and also from the tradition preserved by the Gotipua boys. A few kinds of Bhandha Nritya performed by three young boys attired in feminine fashion were lustily cheered and immensely appreciated by the audience.

The penultimate day was confined to "Mohiniattam" and Bhagavatamela. Smt. Kalyanikuttiamma, the living legend of Mohiniattam, tracing its evolution and explaining its special features, observed that this art attained its ebullience and enrichment only during the 'thirties due to the pioneering efforts of Mahakavi Vallathol. Assisted by her grand-daughter, the veteran performed a few slokas and Padams.

Smt. Revathi Ramachandran, on "Pravesa Darus in Bhagavathamela" observed that this type of operas like Bhagavathamelas was the outcome of the deep Bhakthi and devotion of the Baghavathas towards the Supreme God. She also mentioned that both the Baghavathamela dance dramas of Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu do contain the classical elements of dance and music in abundance and Daru are compositions in music specially composed for the entry of characters in Baghavathamela dance dramas. The word 'Daru' is a derivation from Duruva explained in *Natya Sastra* and other texts of dance. She demonstrated the Pravesa Daru of Sathyabhama from *Bhama Kalam* of Kuchipudi tradition and the Pravesa Daru of Usha from *Usha Parina-*

yam of the Tamilnadu tradition. Though this type of operas has sunk into oblivion now, yet the same would not have come into limelight but for the dedicated efforts and enormous interest exhibited by late E. Krishna Iyer and a score of others.

The concluding day was capped with a lec-dem on "Nattuvangam" by Sri Adyar K. Lakshamanan. The art of Nattuvangam, though difficult to be mastered, is an integral part of dance and any dance concert gets fullness and exuberance if it is only supported by impeccable Nattuvangam, the eminent Guru said. The three essential qualities that are required for an able Nattuvanar, he observed, are knowledge of music and dance, rendition of drum syllables, with clear voice and perfect knowledge of the technique of mridangam. He analysed the various technical aspects of the concept of Nattuvangam and with the assistance of his disciple he demonstrated a few of them and himself rendered a dance piece for a Tamil padam.

An open session with an exchange of ideas and suggestions relating to dance was a sequel in which Dr. Sunil Kothari, Sri V.A.K. Rangarao and Dr. Elrich and others participated.

During the Conference, the Krishna Gana Sabha felicitated, Shri T. S. Parthasarathy and Shri Adyar Lakshamanan for the honour of Fellowship and award conferred on them respectively by the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi.

*(Compiled from the Report by
Dr. K. L. Raman, Madras)*

Hastaks in Kathak

The Use of Hastaks in Kathak" was the subject of the seminar the Kathak Kendra, Delhi, had organised during the last week of March, 1992. A very pertinent topic it was that needed some pondering as little attention has been paid to Hastas, by interpreters at least if not artistes.

One of the reasons for this may perhaps be that due to historical and social upheavals, Kathak had to go to the Muslim courts for sustenance and was branded as a Mughal dance form. But its origin is from the temples and to this day Kathak is being practised in the temples of Ayodhya by Kathakars who are known as Katha Vachiks. They narrate a story through gestures (Hasta Mudras) and expressions.

It was only after the entry of Kathak into the Mughal Courts that the Nritya element increased and it reached a stage when Kathak came to be known as the dance form of footwork and Bhramaris. I personally feel that the artform was enriched in this way. But the result was, little attention was paid to the Abhinaya and Hastaks.

It was Mme Menaka, the pioneer of Kathak, who drew the attention to Hastaks in Kathak. A few photographs of her Hasta Mudras published in my book *Madame Menaka* (Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi) would prove this.

Later, in 1959, when Dr. Mulk Raj Anand brought out the MARG issue on Kathak it carried an article written by Smt. Maya Rao on Hastaks.

It was good to see in the Seminar that not only exponents, dancers and

dance students of Kathak were invited but also authorities in different forms. Guru Mayadhar Raut (Orissi), Shri G. Venu, a scholar who has been quite active in codifying the Hastas in Kathakali, and Shri Bhaskar Chandavarkar, a well-known Music composer and musician participated, sharing their experiences and giving their assessment and guidance.

Unfortunately, no one of stature of Jaipur Gharana was present as Pt. Gauri Shankar, the doyen, passed away recently. It was unfortunate that Pt. Gauri Shankar jealously guarded his position that 'after him who' was never given a thought. And today, though there are merited exponents of this Gharana, whether anyone would volunteer to indulge in so involving a task as codifying Hastas, is doubtful.

The Seminar was inaugurated by the Vice-Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the Karnatak Violin maestro. Shri T. N. Krishnan. It was presided over by Pt. Birju Maharaj. Papers were read, demonstrations held, experiences exchanged, and discussions conducted — all amounting to some education.

Smt. Maya Rao read a paper narrating her experiences with Guru Shambhu Maharaj during her training under him. How she deciphered the Hastas of Ghunghat, Bansuri, the basic pose of keeping the hands in front of the chest, various Gats, Gat Nikas and Gat Bhava — all of which pertain to the Nritya Hastas — was interesting. She narrated some interesting incidents. Shambhu Maharaj would go on changing the Has-

was in different types of Ghunghat and so fast that she would not be able to keep pace with him. Annoyed, he would quip that women from south did not know the use of the Ghunghat as it was not in vogue there. She would request him to proceed slowly.

She had quite a harrowing experience facing the Guru explaining why she requested Shri Govind Vidyarthi (he was with the Sangeet Natak Akademi) to take photographs of the Mudras the Guru articulated while teaching Gat and Gat Bhava. When she showed him the issue of MARG that contained the photographs, he understood and appreciated her efforts to portray the different Hastas used by him. However, he humorously told her not to ask him to memorise the names of these Hastas. They were all practical bound, spontaneous and imaginative.

The system of teaching Hastas in Kathak has started recently, said Maya Rao. She added that Kalanidhi Narayanan told her that memorising the names and Lakshanas of Hastas was introduced in Bharata Natya by Smt. Rukmini Devi and finding that useful other teachers followed.

Smt. Rohini Bhate's paper was short, embellished by demonstration of all the Hastas from *Abhinaya Darpan* — that is the base on which the Kathak exponents work for Hastas. She also did some Abhinaya to a song. She showed some derived Hastas that she uses.

At times some of the panelists asked questions which were off the record. It is true that in Gat Bhava when a short piece is depicted, the whole body is utilised to denote the theme or the idea. This is specially so with Kathak. The

first day ended with the Samyukhta and Asamyukta Hastas.

There were attempts to get demonstrations as to how the Bhangima would be done along with certain Hastas. I suggested that since this Seminar was confined to the Hastas one should not deviate to other spheres.

Jiwan Pani made a point by saying that if we succeeded in making Varnamala (alphabets) of Hastas in this Seminar, we should feel satisfied for having covered the first step.

On the second day, Munnalal Shukla made a point in his paper when he drew our attention to the language problem that existed in earlier times. People communicated with hand gestures and expressions. Today languages have reached their zenith in communication. There is no standardisation of Hastas in Kathak, he remarked. If that could be done the task of the teachers would be made easy. There was a suggestion to change the names of Hastas and Viniyogas.

It was decided to work on Nritya Hastas first and Birju Maharaj was asked to show the movements and name them. The work was started in right earnest and went ahead quite fast. Further discussions were held on Laban Notation and that the need for evolving a notation of these dance movements was stressed.

At the last session on March 25th morning the scholars, from other streams narrated their experiences. G. Venu started with his experiences with Kathakali. He said that about a hundred years ago the Gurus could not tell the names of the Mudras. And to codify the

Mudras and their Viniyogas, it had taken them six years. They were also working on dance notation. None had brought slides though arrangements were made for showing them. However, pencil drawings were made and projected on the screen. He displayed a few important ones, quite interesting.

Guru Mayadhar Raut followed with the experiences with Orissi. According to him, the material available for Mudras and postures, at the time when Orissi was trying to find its footing as a classical dance form were those found in the sculptures and in practice those were found to be inadequate. The Gurus assembled and agreed "to look around and take whatever they could from other forms". They went to the temple and took a vow signing with their blood that this would be done unitedly. Only Shri Pankaj Das did not join them as he was a Mahari's son. He used to attend meetings and supported their discussions but would not act on it. Guru Mayadhar said that "one should steal movements wherever it appealed but not imitate." He was very frank about it and should be admired for that.

Shri Bhaskar Chandavarkar who was called upon to give his comments on the three days' proceedings, said that dance was '*Drishya-Shravya*'. The Parampara training system has been in vogue. The training prevalent in our country, be it music or dance has always been imparted orally and practically. This has been and still is the system followed according to Param-

para. Changes should be brought in Parampara. Parampara should not be made to remain static as any art that remains static cannot live. However, care should be taken to make everything comprehensive.

Notation of dance means trying to make symbol from symbol. It should be seen to that things are not made further complicated. Notation cannot replace the real. He cautioned not to act hastily to take decisions. A committee should be formed of Gurus, scholars and exponents to meet and discuss things from all the angles, he suggested.

This is a very sound advice. No decisions should be taken on emotional grounds. We are so steeped in Parampara that most of the time we are not prepared to look around and see or give a thought to find out whether we are lacking in something. We must not be carried away on emotional grounds. Art must grow. Opinions should be invited and discussed objectively.

If the Kathakali style has taken six years to formulate and standardise a system and, Mohini Attam has taken 4 years, then sufficient time has to be allowed for Kathak standardisation, notation, etc., to evolve a system on sound lines. Scholars from different schools of the same art form, and those from different streams should be consulted before taking any decision.

— Damayanti Joshi

SHANMUKHANANDA FESTIVAL

The 3-day Festival of Music and Dance organised by the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay, and held at the Rajaji Sabhagrah of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Hyderabad was a success for two reasons. The programmes were by themselves attractive enough. The cause for which they were organised made it all the more compelling for the music lovers. The twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad can boast only of a moderate music loving community; and a good portion of it turned up to show their concern for the early restoration of the prestigious Shanmukhananda Hall of Bombay, about which every music lover in the country would have heard and every musician of worth would have aspired to perform in.

The inaugural function on March 21, 1992, gave the art lovers of the twin cities an opportunity to know first hand from the President and Hon. Secretary of the Shanmukhananda Sabha the latest position in the restoration work and it was a big relief to hear that the auditorium could well be in a working condition by April 1993. Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh, Honourable Shri Subhash C. Pratap, who inaugurated the festival said that Andhra Pradesh and the twin cities are alive with an atmosphere of culture and fine arts and that events take place with a satisfying regularity.

The Andhra Pradesh Government, headed by the Chief Minister Mr. N. Janardana Reddy, is very much concerned about providing encouragement and assistance for cultural activities and

the CM said that the Shanmukhananda cause would definitely receive a positive response from the government. The Life Insurance Corporation of India co-sponsored the festival along with the ITC, Bhadrachalam Paper Boards Ltd. and Pennar Group of Industries. Dr. V. Subramanian, President of the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, explained in his welcome address that the Shanmukhananda Hall has been a monument of National Integration & Cultural Synthesis. Just like the Gateway of India of Bombay, the Shanmukhananda Hall was also the Gateway for Indian Culture and Fine Arts. He expressed his satisfaction about his meeting the A.P. Chief Minister Mr. N. Janardana Reddy who, he said, was very considerate and responsive and expressed the hope that they would extend their helping hand.

The opening recital by T. V. Sankaranarayanan was satisfying. T.V.S. sang in Hyderabad only recently. But he does bear repetition. In fact, he performed again in another well-noted forum (Vignana Samithi annual festival) at the end of the month.

Sankaranarayanan's style has no angularities; it flows easily and falls easy on the ears. His occasional touches of his late illustrious uncle and mentor, Madurai Mani Iyer, have a welcome response from the audience, who still have nostalgic memories of the past. On this occasion, TVS had excellent support on the violin from Peri Sriramamurthy and the percussion contingent was headed by Vellore Ramabhadran, a dependable mridangist

and very comfortable to sing with, assisted by Nemani Somayajulu (Ghatam) who combines admirably with any great artiste. So the performance got off to a good start with *Mahaganapathe* (Hamsadhvani) in which TVS gave a sample of his fluent swaras. *Subrahmanyena* (Udayaravichandrika) which followed, had another bout of interesting swara improvisation. Sankaranarayanan then embarked on an elaboration of *Latangi* giving the double delights of Kalyani and Pantuvarali. One would have wished to listen to *Latangi* as such. He sang a Tamil composition, *Venkataramana* (Papanasam Sivan) and the *niraval* and swaras were a treat, with appropriate take-off point from *Alamelunga Manala*.

Sankaranarayanan's *Kharaharapriya* was indeed gratifying. This raga of timeless origin has gathered a huge mass of traditional phraseology and Saint Tyagaraja's compositions are the ones to look for this. TVS very rightly drew as much of the traditional beauty of this raga from some of the compositions of Tyagaraja and it was a satisfying experience. He sang *Rama Neeyeda*, a rare choice, and revelled in a soul-filling *Niraval* starting from *Tana Soukhyamu Taanerugaka*.

The purpose of *Niraval* is two-fold, one is to show one's musical prowess in impromptu improvisation of the 'bar' (one line of the song in the case of Indian music) both melodically and rhythmically. The other is to highlight the lyric as can be understood from the term "*Sahitya Prastara*" which is what '*Niraval*' stands for. In choosing the part of the song for this important musical exercise, the musician should exercise his judgement as to which part should be highlighted that bears any

amount of repetition. Here, the line chosen, was *Tana Soukhyamu Taanerugaka*, *Orulaku Bodhana Sukhama* which means, "What is the good of trying to teach others when one does not know what is good for oneself?" This line of Saint Tyagaraja is an exhortation, 'don't try to teach others, teach yourself first,' 'O doctor, cure thyself,' something like that. When this line is repeated in *Niraval*, the singer is telling himself and the audience to watch carefully what the Saint prescribed and to observe it. So, this aspect was well served when Sankaranarayanan did the *Niraval* in the line *Tana Soukhyamu* ... One wishes every musician observes this aspect when alone the purpose of Karnatak music and the exhortations of Saint composers like Tyagaraja would be served best. TVS sang a Tamil *Padam* of Periyasami, *Muruga Muruga*, in *Saveri* which was a lovely number and equally beautiful was Sivan's "*Eppo Varuvaro*" in *Jonpuri*, a *Madurai Mani* speciality. Sankaranarayanan has long become a brilliant vocalist in his own right and is long past the necessity to hang on to the coat tails of his uncle, though we should always remember the great singers of the past. *Visweswara Darsan Kar* of *Swati Tirunal* in *Sindhu Bhairavi* was a fitting finale to this highly satisfying recital.

Peri Sreeramamurthy's violin accompaniment was quite on a level with the vocalist. In fact, Peri's *Latangi* was a bit brighter. In *Kharaharapriya*, he echoed the lovely phrasings of the vocalist with a finesse. Vellore Ramabhadran was his sedate self on the *mridangam*, highlighting the aspect of immaculate rhythmic balance ("*Kaala Pramaanam*") being maintained by the vocalist. Nemani Somayajulu on the *ghatam* kept his end up.

Mandolin Srinivas, now come of age, has matured as a musician long before. He maintained his prodigious level constantly making big strides of progress all through. Now, at 20, he has already completed over a decade of brilliant performing career. His Mandolin recital was as usual a treat in 'Sunaada' and 'Suswara', (pure melody and pure note).

Srinivas has improved in all aspects of concert music — Raga elaboration, Kriti rendering, Niraval and Swaras. He demonstrated his excellence in every single aspect in his performance, particularly when he was in the main item, *O Rangasayi* in Kambhoji. Like a veteran of many wars, smilingly revelling in the breath-taking variety of swaras, as if it is nobody's business, this wonder kid was appreciating now the by far senior mridangist, Vellore Ramabhadran, who was responding in the most befitting manner to his (Srinivas') own scintillating swara build-up, extending over countless Avarthas. Srinivas does not bother even to look at the Tala and always arrives at the Eduppu with immaculate precision. Srinivas has also developed a zeal for creativity. He played *Saranambhava* a Tarangam which is traditionally sung in Devagandhari, in another raga, which he announced as Hamsa Vinodini. Pasupatipriya, for Muthiah Bhagavathar's *Saravana Bhava* was another rare delight.

It was again Peri Sreeramamurthy who kept the tempo of the performance with his matching responses to the surprises that Srinivas was pulling out of his bag time and again with relentless regularity. Nemani combined well with Vellore Ramabhadran's scintillating display in the solo.

The charismatic Radha and Raja Reddy kept up their reputation on the concluding day when they presented their Kuchipudi dance recital. A highlight of their recital was a scene from the ballet, *Usha Parinayam* in which the couple enacted the dream sequence between Usha and Aniruddha. The item involved how they romanced together, the postures clearly erotic, but that was how the text went, explained Raja Reddy, when spoken to after the recital. Radha said that the postures of the 'Mithuna' (couple) which were mentioned in the text of the song were modelled from the sculptures of Khajuraho and Mahabalipuram temples. It is a sort of 'adults-only' item.

There are several other delightful episodes in the old ballet, such as Usha describing to her maid how in her dream Aniruddha showed her, a maiden, what a wonderful thing love is *Emi Mayalu Chesu poyene*. The ballet is worth seeing performed in its entirety. But of course it requires a cast.

Radha presented another erotic number, Jayadeva's Ashtapadi, *Nijagadhasa Yadunandane* in which Radha, the real one, asks Krishna to restore all her make up, which was smudged when they were together. Earlier, Raja Reddy gave a forceful exposition of 'Nrisimha' Avatar. The conclusion was not with the usual 'Mangalam' *Pavamana Suthudu* but a song on national integration, secularism and benediction for peace *Jayabharathavani*.

Kausalya Reddy did the nattuvangam with her usual verve while Hema Subrahmanyam sang, with Bana Bhaskara Rao on the mridangam.

— C. Kapaleswara Rao

THE THERAPEUTIC VALUE OF MUSIC

(A FIRST PERSON SINGULAR ACCOUNT)*

By
Dr. S. SRINIVASAN

A computerised search of published literature over the past 3 years has revealed over 70 articles dealing with music therapy in a wide variety of journals ranging from the *Nursing Times* to the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, USA, attesting the usefulness of music in clinical management of disorders as varied as anxiety neurosis, malignancy and myocardial infarction. Simultaneously, as a clinician and an active Hindustani vocalist rolled into one, this writer has gone through a melange of experiences over the years leading to startlingly new vistas of education and exploration, at least some of which merit sharing. But more on that later. First a few hard core examples.

Coronary Care : Music therapy has been shown to reduce the incidence of cardiac complications and improve stress related changes in cardiac rate and rhythm. Similar beneficial effects have been noted on the blood pressure, digital temperature, anxiety scores and so on.

Rheumatology : A regimen of emotional volitional training (EVT) incorporating music as one of the components improves the symptomatology of rheumatoid arthritis including pain and stiffness scores, general impairment of functional ability and so on. The duration of hospitalisation is reduced and

remission-free intervals are significantly prolonged.

Pain Management : Regular sessions of active and passive music lead to greater tolerance of pain in patients with a variety of advanced malignancies. Pain due to other causes, such as dental, is also similarly influenced.

Surgery : Music administered through earphones from a walkman to patients scheduled for elective surgery including those for malignancy greatly improves preoperative anxiety scores and associated changes in cardiac, respiratory and autonomic functions, especially in patients whose mother tongue is different from the lingua franca of the hospital.

Neurologic Disorders : Multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, cerebrovascular "accidents", head injuries, intractable headache, and other disorders of the nervous systems are helped by the inclusion of music in the management schedule.

Psychiatry : Anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, mental retardation, autism, psychosomatic disorders of various descriptions, insomnia, behavioural disorders pertaining to aggression, phobias, sexual deviations, drug abuse and the like are amenable to supplementary therapy with music.

*Based on a lecture-demonstration by the author at the Indian Medical Association, Bombay, and published in the *Indian Journal of Internal Medicine*, August, 1991, Vol. 1, No. 11.

Integrating music with deep diaphragmatic breathing and relaxation training favourably affects theta and alpha activity in the EEG, potentiates the hypometabolic counterarousal state, reduces arousal patients associated with cognitive functions and anxiety possibly mediated through subcortical, neuro-nal circuits.

Gastrointestinal Disorders : Patients with acid peptic disease, irritable colon syndrome, "nervous", diarrheas, and other "functional" disorders gain by behavioural therapy and counselling. Superadded music therapy improves success rate of management.

Active vs. Passive Music : Music therapists may begin with passive music either in the background or specially administered through earphones. The word passive may be somewhat misleading as the subject is often made to focus on the music form, at least in part, for proper effect. Active music is resorted to in appropriate cases, depending on individual aptitude and clinical response.

Myths vs. Realities : While scientifically conducted studies do vouch for a role of music in clinical management, one should remember that history is replete with instances of charlatans masquerading as experts, ever ready to jump on the bandwagon as it gets moving. No wonder, exaggerated claims are staked by pundits of various schools on the magical powers of music. Sadly, unlike with Western music, there is a paucity of proper studies conducted on Indian systems of music and this only compounds the problem, especially when the latter offers excellent platforms to work on, such as the drone of the Tanpura, Shruti, etc.

"Ragas for Rogas" : For instance, there are armchair "gharana" musicologists who would glibly attribute therapeutic powers to some ragas in "curing" ailments like malaria and typhoid fever. Such frivolity will only thwart attempts to study Indian music rationally. Unless we develop a scientific bent of mind in musicians and/or a musical openness amongst clinicians, the pendulum will keep swinging between therapeutic nihilism and miracle cures.

Applied Music : Notwithstanding what the polemicists say or do, there is no gainsaying the fact that music in its applied form (as distinct from the pure art form) can be a useful tool in the hands of not merely doctors and patients but any citizen with a fair degree of discernment and intelligence. It has a positive contribution to make in channelising human behaviour, whether in a group or individually.

Demystifying Music : For this purpose, the first step is to bring music down from its high pedestal of halo and jargon and make it level with the individual. Do away with the unwanted gurus and verbiage like 'nada' and 'brahman'. Identify the form of music that naturally appeals to the subject and make a strat with that, be it classical, semi-classical, light, filmi or pop.

The Barrier : The most important and perhaps the most difficult thing to do is to let oneself go and blend with the music, whatever form it may be. This barrier breaking needs a little believing, as is the case with hypnotherapy, auto-suggestion and biofeedback. Once this step is crossed, things proceed a lot smoothly.

Self-Management : An introspective component of personality is a prerequisite if this aspect is to be successfully brought out with music. Cutting off other sensory inputs — visual, auditory or somatic — and concentrating on a preselected non-rhythmic or slow — rhythmic musical form sets the stage. An integrative effort of this type repeated on a daily basis can reset the conditioning behaviour of the subject in a profound manner.

Inner Exploration : Returning to the first person singular dimension alluded to earlier, repeated positive reinforcements of the sort described above, coupled with the somatic aspects of breath control, steady vocalisation, auditory feedback to the cortex with possible subcortical and limbic involvement and so on will eventually open a totally new vista of inner exploration to the individual — a vista that is at once secular and transcendental.

Conclusion : No matter what the level of musicality of the subject is, to begin with, it is clear that the judicious use of music as an organised form of sound energy administered individually or in a group, actively or passively, can have a

salutary effect on a variety of clinical disorders. Unlike the Western countries, clinicians in India have yet to exploit the full therapeutic potential of this medium, which should be possible with the right blend of art and science.

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NADANJALI

Geetha Mala & Annai Isai Malai. By Manonmani Rangaswamy.
Published by Sri Aurobindo Society. Price : Rs. 35 & Rs. 3 respectively.

Geetha Mala and Annai Isai Malai are collections of hymns with a difference. Composed by Manonmani Rangaswamy, they hail Sri Aurobindo, and the Divine Mother and what better medium could there be than music to express one's adoration, devotion and utter surrender !

If "Lord Shiva consumed poison to save the Devas and received the holy Ganga on his matted locks for the welfare of the Universe," Sri Aurobindo is said to have "sacrificed his life to bring Supramental Force down to the earth. Making Mirra, the Universal Mother, he withdrew from this world. How can we describe this wonderful sacrifice?" So goes the English translation of a hymn.

The power of Mirrabika, the embodiment of Goddess Shakti, the Universal Mother, pervades many of the hymns.

"The Mother despite being born in a foreign land, had desired to become the pet daughter of India....."

"Mother is the Sadhana as well as the Sadhak....."

"Perish the ego, make way for the victory of Yuga Dharma."

"God is greater, but Nature is bound by Mother's will...."

"Mother does not encourage worship. She says that one gets happiness through deep love. We are born in this unhappy world. Let us get drowned in the Bhajans on the Lord."

These are sample extracts from the hymns. The songs in Hindi and Tamil exude bhakti. The language is simple so as to reach even an average man. There is an aesthetic and emotional touch too in the selection of Ragas. The musical instincts of the author is discernible in the treatment of Apoorva Ragas like Viswapriya, Sekhara Chandrika, Janasam-Modhini, Sumanesa Ranjani, Varamu, on par with the more popular Kalyani, Kapi, Lalitha, Hindolam, Sindhu Bhairavi etc. There is also priority given to modes common to both Indian musical systems.

Though not provided with notation, much is left to the singer's imagination either to render them as Keertans where the Talas are provided or give his imagination a free rein traversing in shloka or Virutham.

The songs in Hindi, transliterated in Tamil and translated to English would enable many to understand the deeds of the divine souls and pay their pranams through Nadjali. But would the price of *Geetha Mala* be within the reach of the average man ?

R. S.

CULTURAL SCENE IN BOMBAY

Bauli

*Vighnangalokkeyum maari
Vibhoothikal vilanjitaan,
Vighnaraajan thunackenam
Viswamangalakaaranan !*

Saraswathi

*Naadam thanna Saraswathee, varakalaa vaaraasi
thaneeswaree,
Naada brahma mahaadbhuthangal virachichcheetunna
Visweswaree,
Naakam ninnute sannidhaana, mathil nin sathyotsavacchayai!
Naanaamarthyarumothitena, mathinaay thaaye, thunackename !*

Shanmukhapriya

*Viswaththil saanthiyeraan, kalayute kalayaam sathyasoundarya
meraan,
Viswaasam marthyanaan, kaliyugamithilum snehachai-
tanyameraan,
Vamsaththin veeryameraan, anudinamathirattaarsha
samskaarameraan !
Viswesaa, Shanmukhaa, nee kaniyana, mathinaay kyka!
kooppunnu ngangal !*

These are verses invoking Lord Vigneswara, the remover of 'Vignas', Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge and Shanmukha, the presiding deity of the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha and specially composed as a prayer by Shri Krishnan Parapally who was felicitated by the Sabha and sister institutions for his 50 years' of service to literary causes, early March. And the prayer strung in a Ragamalika Virutham in Bauli, Saraswathi and Shanmukhapriya was offered touchingly by V. Vamanan, an artiste in his own right, and currently doing his diploma in music at the Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya.

The verses speak of the versatility of the poet and serve in themselves as

one of the best offerings Parapally made to the Arts and Literature.

Encomia were showered on him for his services to Malayalam literature, by various speakers, but nothing could excel the 'chiselled' observation Shri Gulabdas Broker made on the occasion : "A writer has no country. He belongs to the whole world. He is a man of literature, a man of the world." And this man of the world, the world of literature, was honoured, besides floral tributes, with a Ponnadai and a Shanmukha memento by the Sabha. A book in English, *A Panoramic Profile of Poet Krishnan Parapally*, Translated by Dr. P. R. Raghavan and Dr. Vijayaraghavan S. Nayar was released on the occasion by Justice K. Sukumaran, of Bombay High Court.

"What is a Padam? It is not just the devotional songs, 'Padas', which it generally denotes. It is a special form of composition, propagated by Kshet-ragna in a sustaining Kalapramana, that is the Vilamba Kala, containing the essence and exuding the energy of a Raga. In other words, Padam is Raga concretised. The image of a Raga effulges in all its characteristic grandeur and grace as the Padam is rendered. It requires a special voice power and texture, a special *gnana* to learn, why even to listen. That is acquired only after the voice is well seasoned in a 'Padam' பதம் — as a result of relentless Sadhaka. Even in a concert Padam figures only after the musician reaches his peak, getting his voice and *manodharma* set."

That is no textual definition, but a very succinct introduction Sangeeta Kalanidhi T. Brinda gave before her demonstration on "Padam-Javali" under the aegis of the Shanmukhananda Sabha.

The essence of her introduction, the validity of her vital emphasis, was in her rendition. To cite just one instance, the Raga Ananda Bhairavi acquired its classical aura when rendered in 'Ati Vilambam', its nuances emerging in clear intonation. It needs no reiteration that Ananda Bhairavi had its origin in folk melody. Nevertheless today it is a mode uniquely Karnatak, not yielding to adaptation by other musical streams. Pattakunna came as a *Padam non-pareil*.

A believer in singing and not in speech, Brinda let her demonstration of Padam and Javali, rendered alternately, speak for itself. At the threshold of 80, her voice still has its firm *Sruti* and breath control, the *Visranti* — all re-

quired for the rendition. Sankarabharanam, Purvi Kalyani, Ahiri. Bilahari, Nadanamakriya, Useni etc., were rendered in their pristine glow.

Brinda's emphasis on practice, Sadhaka, in preference to groping in theory was well received. 'Let the ear be the determining factor rather than intellect' was the message she conveyed through the Pharaz Javali *Smarasundarangi*, once rendered plain-coated and then with right microtonal emphasis and gamaka flexions. Assisting Brinda were Alamelu Mani and Kalyani Sharma (Vocal), Anand Srinivasan (Violin) and P. K. Moorthy (Mridangam).

T. Brinda who had been in the city for over a fortnight on a recording assignment at the NCPA and Doordarshan gave lec-dems and conducted short course. The city Sabhas, organised, under the aegis of Fine Arts Society, Chembur, a felicitation for the doyen, that was followed by a recital by her.

* * * * *

Melody and mime reached their peak in February, one may say, when two top notchers, T. V. Sankaranarayanan and Chitra Visweswaran captivated the audience with melodic excellence and visual symphony, respectively, performing for the Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha at the Indian Gymkhana Grounds.

Flanked by veteran violinist, Chandrasekharan whose vocalised inflexions often create an illusion of the violin literally singing and the percussion pair, Mridangist Tiruvarur Bhaktavatsalan brimming with ideas that express themselves through voluble strikes and 'strokes', and seasoned V. Nagarajan, the left-hander, moulding the Kanjira to a modulated tone-strokes, Sankarana-

rayanan soared high giving a free rein to his musical ideas.

Sarvalaghu saukhyam was one of the factors that endowed the concert with aesthetic richness. Traversing the octaves with flashes of brilliance and Sancharas of shimmering beauty, Sankaranarayanan went nostalgic, treading the path of his late uncle, the legendary melodist Madurai Mani Iyer, but with his own personalised touches. Shedding the staccato phrases, he made a flowing melodic design of the warp and the weft.

A relish and resilience which marked the opening strains of the Hamsadhwani pleading for Gajarajamukha's compassion in the lyrics of Papanasam Sivan — the 20th Century Tyagaraja's — *Karunai Seyvai* continued throughout the recital. The swaras to the piece got off to an exhilarating pace engaging the accompanists in compatible dialogue.

TVS went nostalgic in *Thaye Yasode* (Todi), recapturing his uncle's variations in *Kaalini chilambu konja* with his own flourishes. So was his treatment of the swaras to *Sukhi evvaro* (Kanada). The alapana and kriti rendition however were his own.

Sankaranarayanan's Kalyani was a fine example of the textural finesse of a flowing melodic design. Built on a solid base with sustaining *Sruthi* he decked it with brikka brocades and gamaka grace and the alapana came off with racy grandeur and rare charm. GNB's *Kamalasini* was the only number elaborately treated to an alapana-nirawal-swaraprasthara sequence in which Chandrasekharan played with equal felicity and flourish.

One could count upon TVS going off-beat in selecting the mode for Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi, but not in Pallavi structure. None could question the selection of Andolika for this major Manodharma suite for, the relish and fluency with which he delineated it left one admiring at his capacity to present such a hue of rare beauty. He seldom indulges in tight-rope walk Pallavi. So was the Tripata Tala Pallavi, though the odd take-off did keep the intricacies and concert spirit high. The Ragamalika swaras in Vandanadharini and Desh added a colourful finale.

The next day Chitra Visweswaran made her concert of mime, *Purandara Krishnamritam*, an experience. The 'felt' intensity and subtlety in the exposition made the dance depiction on Krishna strikingly refreshing. Besides there was another facet projected of the Saint bard, the Sangeetha Pithamaha, not much deeply explored so far, which elicited interest. To the usual *Vairaghyaya Bhakti*, that is attributed to this miser-turned-mendicant bard there was *Madura Rati*, *Sringara* on the human plane, with *Nayaka-Nayika bhava*, which Chitra highlighted. The *Sambhoga Sringara* highlighted in the three-act solo dance-drama depicting Krishna as *Gopi-manohara*, the eternal lover, the *Nayika* pining for Krishna's love, pleading to him to come and take her in *Ide Samayam Ranga Barelo* (*Bhimपालas*) and Krishna complying with request in *Saddi Madalu Bedavo Ranga* (*Yamuna-Kalyani*) with subtle dramatics were impressive. The *sancharis* of love play were something of a relation not so far gone into detail in the Sain't compositions.

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Friday — 22.5.1992 — 7.30 P.M.

Trichy Miss M. SANKARI
(Disciple of Violin Maestro
Shri Lalgudi Jayaraman) & Party

— Vocal Music Concert

Saturday — 23.5.1992 — 6.00 P.M.

Sangeetha Kalanidhi

Nedunuri KRISHNAMURTHY & Party

— Vocal Music Concert

Sunday — 24.5.1992 — 6.00 P.M.

Violin Duo

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The other two aspects of depiction, Vatsalya in Purandaradasa's vision, in his selfless devotion to the divine child, the ever-mischievous pranskter, and Krishna, as the preacher of the highest philosophy and saviour of the Universe had some moments of chiselled *Bhava-bhinaya*.

Chitra's visualisation of the *Vish-warupa* and of the hapless Draupadi were touching. The poignance, awe, reverence and abject surrender in these episodes were heart-rending. Strains of Revathi (*Harive sarvoththama*) and Bageshri (*Neene Anaatha bandhu*) rent the air. With the preacher-saviour depiction of the Lord, Chitra touched a new high in *abhinaya*. The prelude that led to the culmination of these was marked for its slick *sancharis*, percussive backdrop and melodic delineation.

Her eloquence and effervescence in *Vatsalya* is something very much part of her style. In a presentation where *abhinaya* dominated, the interspersing *Nritta* stances gave fillip to the unfolding of the theme. And, leaps and sweeps so much part of her style, though not done away with, were under restraint and that sustained the lilt and lucidity of the enactment.

Music composed by Visweswaran, though with dominance of Hindustani hues and rendered with leanings of northern *shaili*, enhanced the melodic impact of the wings. The twosome percussion, mridangam-tabla was a bit loud though their synchronised *bols* gave a pep up to the dance drama.

The Chief Guest of the day, Justice B. N. SriKrishna, who has been closely associated with the Sabha, as its legal

adviser and as Member of the Board of Trustees, was felicitated with Ponnadai. The function was graced by Shri B. G. Deshmukh, the former Union Cabinet Secretary, and at present a Member of the Managing Committee of the Sabha.

The month of April has its own attraction in the annals of the Sabha, besides concerts by veterans and versatile artistes. The distribution of prizes to winners of the various competitions annually held by the Sabha and the award of scholarships to its Vidyalaya students, bring out many a talent to the public focus; Out of which quite a number of them have got on subsequently to performing circuit too.

After the pleasant function, Sikkil Sisters who gave away the prizes and scholarships, rendered a flute recital that was truly in the traditional style that they are known for. There is no compromise in their Bani of traditional norms, yet they are innovative, their imagination seeking aesthetic forays in ever fresh phrasings.

The recital had such rakti Ragas like Ritigoula, Hindolam, the grand Kam-bhoji, Kapi for Pallavi and Revathi etc. with aesthetically evocative build-up of alapanas and decorative, crisp swara dialogue added to neat rendition of Kritis that the whole performance rose in classical quality. Commendable was their gesture to encourage teenager Gayatri (a last minute substitute) to come out with her natural talent on the Violin. The budding talent, who bagged two prizes in the vocal competitions, rose up to meet the sisters' style and played with mature poise. The technique of her bowing and fingering has a natural finesse, the result of her

grooming by the ideal teacher Sangeetha Bhushanam, T. S. Krishnaswami, at the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya.

Gayatri rose to greater heights when accompanying the next day Madurai G. S. Mani, a musician with daring innovative instincts. He enthused her into pyrotechnics which she played with noise and restraint. He was all appreciation and soon settled to serious music, rendering *Purvikalyani* (*Paraloka Sadhaname*), *Mukhari* (*Talachinathane*) and *Shanmukhapriya* (*Vali Nayaka*) before turning towards more popular numbers. The power of his voice, its resonance were captivating and that kept the audience right through, though they would have preferred a full-classical recital from him.

The Fine Arts Society, Chembur, presented in its tastefully decorated Community Hall Geetha Rajasekhar of Pattammal — Jayaraman school in a vocal recital accompanied by Gayatri (Violin) and DKJ's son Vaidyanathan (Mridangam). Her Todi spelt the potential she has and the accompanists acquitted themselves with utmost ease.

In elevating Saxophone, an ensemble instrument of Western orchestra, to the Karnatak solo, by subduing its tone with soft blowing technique, Kadri Gopalnath has accomplished an exemplary feat. Perhaps his early training in Nagaswaram had helped him with the knack and tact of tackling this equally loud-toned instrument. The elegant touches of microtones and gamakas graces that fluently flowed in his melody marked him not only as an artiste but an aesthete too. His subdued penetration into the delicate labyrinths of Subhapantuvarali evoking its deep

pathos was touching. His selection of Vasudevachar's *Paripahimam* was refreshing. The concert comprised mostly oft repeated kritis like *Vatapi* (Hamsadhvani), *Sri Raga Pancharatnam*, *Sudhamayi* (Amritavarshini), *Bhajare* (Abheri) etc.

Accompanying him were K. Sivakumar (Violin), Vaikom Gopalakrishnan (Mridangam) and Sriram (Kanjira), who teamed up well to make it a pleasant evening. Only that the huge Tata Theatre (aegis, NCPA) wore a near empty look and it must be said to the credit of the musicians that they looked for inspiration within music and not elsewhere, especially from audience!

The small Gomantak Hall was packed to capacity when Sudha Raghunathan, the disciple of MLV, gave a recital for the Music Triangle in March. Sudha's voice is her forte. It has mellifluity and range, lustre and lucidity and in her eloquence MLV's Bani comes alive. And she resorts to no modulation to evoke Bhava.

It was a delightful experience listening to the chela soaring high with imagination and intensity adding to the Bani her own improvisation and individuality. Sriranjani (*Gajavadana*), Subhapantuvarali (*Ennallu*), Suddha Dhanyasi (*Narayana*) and an expansive Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi in Kalyani, plus the Tukkadas — all bore testimony to her concert prowess.

K. Sivaraman (Violin) played with understanding and Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan (Mridangam) displayed his talent with over-enthusiastic sound strokes.

A look back into our rich heritage, 'going to the roots', as it were, has of

late gained momentum and in this Dr. Kanak Rele's conceptualisation of *Silappadikaram* in a dance-drama format with Hindi lyrics has projected a modern interpreter's vision of an ancient *Kavya*. The epic-story of high flown Tamil, cast in simple Hindi lyrics and set in musical modes common to both Hindustani and Karnatak idioms with rhythms attuned to both classical and folk lilt in dance and highlighting moods and episodes, was certainly aimed at reaching an audience, vast and beyond the regional and lingual limitations. Vasant Dev's lyrics and Narayan Mani's music brought to life the inner core of the *Kavya* with a proper blend of classical and folk texture.

Silappadikaram, revolving round the eternal triangle, the story of the ideal couple Kovalan-Kannagi and the courtesan Madhavi, is an excellent piece of literature. It is an authentic record throwing light on the historical, socio-cultural attainments of the people, especially on the high standard in the arts of music, dance and drama. The origin and evolution of fine arts among the Tamils, music and dance particularly, with the Lakshanas for the art, the artistes and the art masters are neatly recorded in it. And these are valid even today. It contains a panoramic view of the three southern kingdoms of Chera, Chola, Pandya, their prosperity and patronage to art and culture, the urban and rural life, the rites and rituals they observed. And all these converge on to the high moral that the people upheld, the power of the Paththini Deivam, and the ultimate victory of the virtuous Kannagi, emerging as a 'supreme Jewel', though not

before having had her 'fill' of sorrow at the hands of Destiny.

The highlight of the choreography by Kanak Rele was in presenting the main story line in copious incidents, weaving through the classical and folk idioms of dance and music, depicting the rites and rituals and incidentally driving home the morals and messages. With all these couched in simple lyrics and tuneful melodies and rendered by musicians with excellent 'feel', the music added an aural dimension to the visual. And with the Hi-Fi technique, the recorded music came through as good as live orchestra.

In actual dance, Mohini Attam dominated including in Madhavi's Arangetram, with a blend of the 'Sadir', the modern Bharata Natyam. The element of Sutradhari was given a place of importance in a narrative sequence, introducing each episode, the turn of events, etc. The folk dances typical of Tamil Nadu and Kerala added colour and gusto to the production. The presentation by the students of the Nalanda Dance Research Centre though did not rise up to professional finish gave the epic a visual perception. The dancers, specially the main trio, required to get the feel of their characters, and the cursory glimpses towards the end led it to a tame finale instead of leaving any impact the *kavya* does.

Now that the beginning has been made in giving the ancient *Kavya* a visual interpretation, efforts could be made to improve and give it a sustaining image.

— KINNARI

A Miracle That Was Kumar Gandharva

TRAGEDY struck the music world again early this year leaving this time a deeper scar, a void not easy to fill, with the passing away of Kumar Gandharva. The peace-loving hill town of Dewas, that had happily been humming with music for over four decades, was choked into silence. The blow to Hindustani music especially, is severe as very few could rise up to the eminence that Kumar Gandharva scaled with all the physical infirmities he suffered.

Handicapped with just one lung, Kumar Gandharva was, in fact, a miracle that happened to the Indian music scene. Communing with the pristine beauty of Nature, absorbing all that is subtle and beautiful, soulful and scintillating in melody, be it emanating from Nature, from people or from idioms classical or folk, he gave a facelift to the classical heritage, turning it into a palatable art expression.

Born in Belgaum district in 1924, Shivputra Komkali had his music training under Prof. B. R. Deodhar and Smt. Anjanibai Malpekar. He soon showed his creative instincts by assimilating styles of various maestros and imitating them to perfection which prompted a Swami to call him 'Kumar Gandharva' and that name stuck for good. Ill health compelled him to leave Bombay for a cooler climate and his choice fell on Dewas which became his permanent home.

Recuperation in Dewas, it may be said, brought a great revelation to him. The creative instincts in him were inspired, the 'rebel' in him stirred, and a totally new style of rendition emerged giving his musical presentation a new direction, a new dimension and a new aesthetic expression. His style was characterised by the use of silent pauses in between musical sojourns, staccato phrasings, whispering sweeps, either preceding or following intricate *taans* and concentration that could almost amount to meditation in the *madhya sthayi* (middle octave), all with his depleted lung power. Yet what a resourceful style he made out of it!

He would not reveal the Raga instantly. He revelled in keeping the listeners on tenterhooks as to what his next move was or what skein he would be designing. Herein the law of silence came in handy to him. Though limited in range, the sudden crescendo, the spiralling to the upper reaches in darts, the anguish in tone, the placidity in pensiveness — all had a touch of the magic. His music cast a spell; mesmerised the listeners.

The very bold leap forward he made in his style (not binding himself to any *gharana* nor blindly toeing the tradition) brought him both bouquets and brickbats. He was acclaimed for his creativity, surging innovation in Ragas and compositions, seeking for the most beautiful expression as the ultimate; which endeared him to both connoisseurs and the common man. Whether his musical expression was a result of a blend of classical and folk idioms or the presentation of a folk melody in classical garb or whether the rendition adhered to techniques or tenets of performance, neither the singer nor the listeners bothered. The mesmeric effect that it created was what mattered. The charm of his music lay in its unpredictability!

Ironically, this got him into deep controversy where many of his critics accused him of 'flowing the folk' into classical idiom or flouting the norms of note by note development and following a haphazard build up. But genius that he was, he turned a deaf ear to these insinuations and went about his mission of searching for few musical expressions with total dedication. His deep research into the source of the Raga, the folk founts from which many a sophisticated classical mode has sprung, yielded melodies like *Malavati*, *Madh Suraja*, *Lagan Gandhar*, *Saheli Todi*, *Sanjari*, *Bihad-Bhairavi* etc., that swayed his *rasikas*. Most revolutionary perhaps was his *Gandhi Malhar* as a tribute to the Father of the Nation during his centenary year, which he rendered at the Vigyan Bhavan. Composing new Ragas came to him naturally as new Ragas were not "made", they were only "discovered", for Ragas already "existed". They were only to be discovered and in the process they were "invested with a dimensional and visible reality".

The aesthete in him found enormous scope in the cycles of Nature, the seasons, and the result is the seasonal offerings of compositions, *Geeta Vasanta*, *Geeta Varsha* and *Geeta Hemanta*. Not restricting with Ragas and compositions alone, he stretched his imagination and innovation to regions of bhajans too where his 'Sangeet kavita' found ample scope for fine expression. Kabir, Meera, Surdas and Tukaram inspired him into fresh interpretations. The Nirguna bhajans are the priceless legacies he bequeathed in the realm of devotional music. The much popular *Natya Sangeet* was not to be left out. Though caught in a cobweb of controversy he continued with his own originality. No two renditions by him of the same *bandish* were similar. So original had he been that every time he took up a Raag or Khayal or Bhajan, it was a fresh improvisation. 'Extempore' in all its entirety was the 'core' of his performance!

Like other geniuses, he too was eccentric. Commenting on his music a veteran confrere once remarked, "His music could take him and his listeners to great heights if he was in mood or could drop both of them unceremoniously into the abysmal depths of listlessness!" He was called a 'rebel' by some, a prodigy by others, an 'exclamation mark' in the world and so on.

Laurels or criticism rested easy on his shoulders. He was one of the few who received high honours and awards from the State and the Academies, which include Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Kalidas Samman and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. His end came before receiving the Hafiz Ali Memorial Award.

A legend in his own times, he won over a large number of Rasiks and colleagues with his child like simplicity, humility and dedication to music. Hailed as a superb teacher he was different here too. He taught his students, letting them flower into their own with their own imagination. He was a Karma Yogi, in imparting training, according to Satyasheel Deshpande, one of his students. His wife Vasundara and son Mukul too have been his students, and they have blossomed into musicians in their own rights.

Whether Dewas recuperates from this shock and a 'Kumar Gharana' springs up, would depend on the dedication and zeal of his disciples to carry on diligently, from where the master left.

— Sulochana Rajendran

— Courtesy : SUNDAY FREE PRESS JOURNAL

OBITUARY

We record with deep regret the passing away recently of Shri M. G. Iyer, former Deputy General Manager, Western Railway, Bombay, who served the Sabha as a Member of the Managing Committee during the 'fifties, in its formative stage and later as Vice President and worked for the growth of the organisation.

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TRYST WITH MUSIC

Once I heard my uncle saying that his doctor had advised him to reduce his weight as he had developed hypertension. He was innocently wondering where the extra pound lay, when I teasingly quipped that it was quite obvious he could not 'see' as it was his head which was 'overweight' (though his head was more than proportionate to his body)! He just smiled it away. That was typical of Nagore Ambi Iyer, the ever congenial, accommodative Mridanga Vidwan. His sudden demise early this year set me onto the road of nostalgia. What a humorous man he was behind that serious, pre-occupied, contemplative countenance!

Born in 1921 at Thandankorai near Tanjavur to Subramania Iyer and Mangalam, Ambi Iyer made his debut at the Upanayanam of Director Subramanyam's son where he accompanied the legendary Papanasam Sivan's Vocal recital. A disciple of Sikkil Narayanaswamy Pillai and Tanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer, his was an art known for its subtle strokes and Sarvalaghu permutations. And that naturally put him at ease with any Vidwan, top performer or blossoming artiste.

A man of genial temperament and gentle habits, uncle was a very balanced person. He loved his family. His ready wit and humour won him many friends and he was a born 'PRO', for others. He never once lost his temper. He withstood many a vicissitude with composure. Once, soon after the

death of M. K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, whom he regularly accompanied during the early years of his career, his profession suffered a severe setback. It was only his unruffled nature, patience and fortitude that came to his rescue in the face of adversity.

It was also a turning point, I feel, in the sense, that he was flung into the midst of musicians and more musicians and he spent the rest of his life accompanying them till the last breath. Ariyakudi, Alathur, Chembai, Madurai Mani Iyer, Maharajapuram Santhanam, T. V. Sankaranarayanan, Dr. S. Ramanathan, D. K. Jayaraman, D. K. Pattammal, Mani Krishnaswamy, R. Vedavalli, Bombay Sisters — the list is endless — have had his percussion support.

The one incident which shook him to the core was the tragic demise of Alangudi Ramachandran (Ghatam) with whom he paired for a concert of D. K. Jayaraman at the Shanmukhananda Sabha. He often used to recall the scene, the massive heart attack to which Ramachandran succumbed, during the concert, with deep sorrow.

I am very proud of my uncle. Our forefathers were no musicians, no music lovers, not even remotely musically inclined! Hailing from such a background to have carved a niche in the highly competitive world of music is no mean achievement. If I sing well tomorrow people may remember my uncle and say 'she

is so and so's niece, naturally she has inherited his talent! But alas! the same could never be said of my uncle. His talent was his very own; it was no inheritance. He nurtured it. He defied life and destiny and he had his exciting tryst with music.

Fame and name did come to him *albeit* belatedly. It started in 1976 with Sri Sringeri Jagadguru awarding a medal and Ponnadai, followed by Kanchi Acharya Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal's conferring the title of "Mridanaga Nadamani" which he cherished as the most memorable event of his life.

"Kalaimamani" and a 'Porkizhi' by Tamil Nadu Iyal Isai Nataka Manram, Music Academy's Certificate of Merit and TTK memorial award for 'meritorious musicians', Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer Trust's honour for his long service to Karnatic music, are some of the laurels he received. He was felicitated for his fifty years of meritorious service to music in 1984. The tryst with music that started at the age of 13 continued and would have entered its diamond jubilee had not destiny overtook him.

— Ganga Rajan

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